JUST THE FACTS: ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION IN THE STATES - PAGE 22

How Parents Saved THE EDISON SCHOOL in San Francisco, p. 9

School Reform News

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How Promising Is "Accountability"?

A flawed system in California rewards repeated failure

BY DON SOIFER

As Congressional conference committee negotiations continue for President George W. Bush's "No Child Left Behind" education initiative, one of the critical elements of the plan hinges on expansion of existing state accountability mechanisms to measure students' academic progress.

However, as California's experience with its Academic Performance Index has shown, when state-level systems themselves are flawed, the result is dubious accountability that rewards failure as well as success.

"We need to set clear goals for performance and demand that our schools get the job done," Secretary of Education Roderick Paige declared in testimony before the U.S. Senate earlier this year. But if existing state accountability mechanisms do not set clear goals, the prospects for real improvements in student performance become increasingly doubtful.

California Rewards Bad Schools

Under the Governor's Performance Awards program, California offers bonus funding as an incentive for schools to improve. But the program operates in such a manner that, in practice, some of the largest "performance awards" have gone to badly performing schools…even to schools that fell to the state's worst rating after placing in the second-to-worst category the year before.

The index, in place since 1999, is based on the performance of students in grades 2-11 on the Stanford 9/STAR test. It

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Union Called Shots on Democrats' Agenda

Former Vice President Al Gore, shown here at the July 6, 2000 convention of the National Education Association, denied that unions determined his Presidential campaign's position on school vouchers. Photo Tim Boyle/Newsmakers

Coordinated activity continued into 2000 elections

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Although then-Vice President Al Gore last year emphatically denied that he opposed school vouchers to reward labor unions that helped finance his party and his campaign, campaign documents show labor union leaders had "effective veto power" over Democratic campaign strategy in the 1996 election cycle.

Additional documents cited by the Landmark Legal Foundation in a complaint against the National Education Association indicate possibly illegal coordinated activity occurred in the 1998 and 2000 election cycles.

Landmark's complaint, filed with the Internal Revenue Service on July 20, alleges not only that the NEA extensively coordinated campaign activities with the Democratic National Committee but also—despite reporting zero spending for political activities—that the teacher union used millions of dollars of tax-exempt funds for political purposes. Landmark filed complaints with the IRS last year about the union's political activities and

DEMOCRATS continued on page 6

Private Teacher Training on the Rise

Firms pursue wide range of teacher prep strategies

BY ROBERT HOLLAND

Teacher training and certification are becoming a bit less of a state monopoly with the advent of teacher preparation in the private sector. Although these ventures by private education providers are generally not intended to challenge conventional schools of education, that could be the result over time.

Currently, the major private-sector providers of teacher training are Edison Schools, Inc., Sylvan Learning Systems, the University of Phoenix, and the Core Knowledge Foundation. Each is tackling the issue of teacher training from a different strategic perspective.

Edison Schools, Inc.

Edison Schools, Inc., the nation's largest for-profit manager of public schools, is going into teacher training in a big way. It has launched an Edison Teacher Colleges division for this purpose; at its helm is Dr. Deborah McGriff, a former Detroit school superintendent who has led Edison's development of charter schools across the country.

Within seven years, Edison expects to be training would-be teachers on campuses in 20 cities. These will be communities that have clusters of Edison Schools offering K-12 education.

Asked by *School Reform News* why Edison is embarking on such an ambitious plan, McGriff replied, "To ensure that we have the quantity of teachers and administrators needed to meet our growth targets and the talent needed to meet our academic performance targets."

Asked if there was a perception that existing schools of education are not turning out enough well-prepared teachers, she responded,

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Caroline Minter Hoxby

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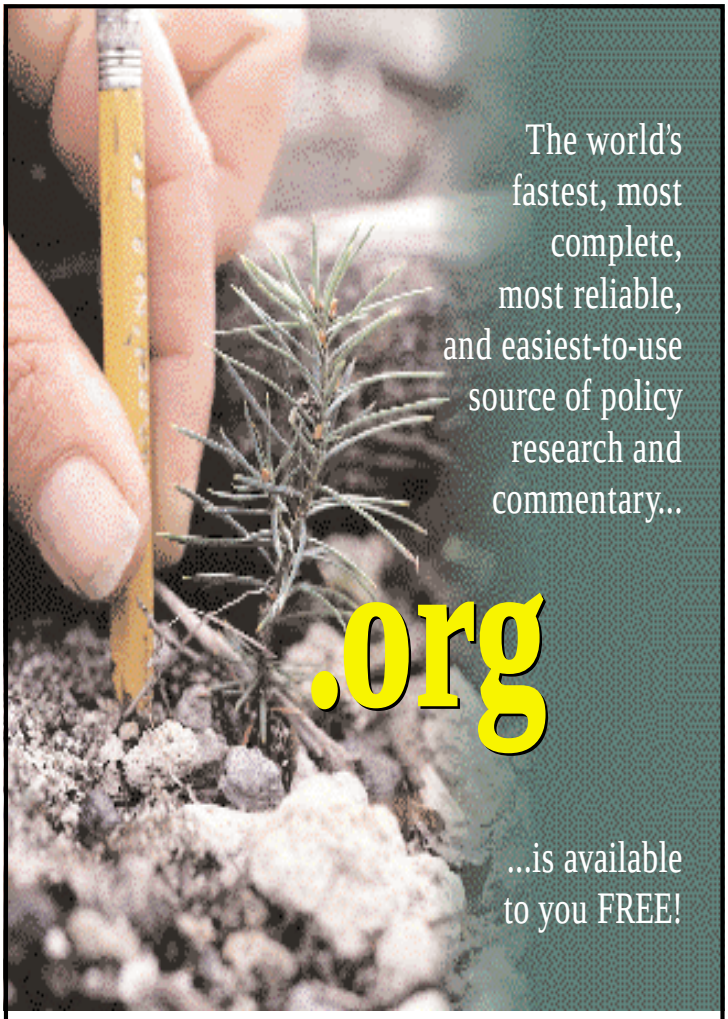
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School Reform News

EDITORIAL OFFICES
The Heartland Institute
19 South LaSalle, Suite 903
Chicago, Illinois 60603
312/377-4000 voice • 312/377-5000 fax
e-mail think@heartland.org

School Reform News is available on the Internet. Point your web browser to http://www.heartland.org.

PRESIDENT
Joseph L. Bast

PUBLISHER
Nikki Saret

EDITOR
Diane Carol Bast

MANAGING EDITOR
George A. Clowes, Ph.D.

ART AND DESIGN
Kevin M. Fitzgerald
Jennifer A. Beranek

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Kelly Amis, Mike Antonucci, Robert Holland, Pam Riley, Paul Seibert Nina Shokraii Rees (on leave), Don Soifer Fritz Steiger, Tom Tancredo, Bryan Taylor Kevin Teasley, Herbert J. Walberg Ph.D. Lee H. Walker

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Should Classes Be Smaller . . . or Simply More Orderly?

How little disruptions rapidly eat up classroom learning time

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

There is much debate over different strategies for increasing the amount of learning time available in the average school year—such as increasing attendance rates, lengthening the school day, cutting out recess, and lengthening the school year. Little attention has been paid, however, to how much student learning time is reduced by disruptive student behavior.

Until now. A recent research study of educational productivity has provided an effective framework for better understanding this debate. The study also highlights the importance of teacher quality and raises questions about the cost-effectiveness of class size reduction proposals.

It's easy to understand how the behavior of a single undisciplined child can severely disrupt a class of students and leave significantly less time available for learning. For example, if an unruly student monopolizes 20 percent of a teacher's time and distracts other students at the same time, only 80 percent of the class time is left for learning.

What is less easy to appreciate is how even low levels of disruptive behavior on the part of all students also can result in a major reduction in the amount of time available for learning.

Unruly Students Affect Entire Class

In a paper presented to an American Economic Association meeting earlier this year, Edward Lazear, an economist at the Hoover Institution and Stanford Graduate School of Business, presented a model of how disruptions by individual students affect the time available for learning for the class as a whole.

"A student who is disruptive or who takes up teacher time in ways that are not useful to other students affects not only his own learning, but that of others in the class," explains Lazear.

Lazear's model calculates learning time as the time remaining after disruptions. For example, if the class has one student or 30 students, the time available for learning is 100 percent if there are no disruptions. But if, on average, each student disrupts the class 1 percent of the time, the time available for learning drops to 99 percent for a one-student class . . . and to just 74 percent for a class size of 30.

The big drop in learning time for the larger class is because each student's potential 99 percent learning time is reduced by the disruptions of each of the other 29 students. For a one-student class, the time available for learning is 99 percent; for a two-student class, it is 99 percent times 99 percent, or 98 percent; for a 30-student class, it is 99 percent multiplied by 99 percent 30 times, or 74 percent.

In mathematical terms, the time available for learning is the percentage of time the student is not being disruptive raised to the power of class size, i.e. Time available for learning = (Percentage of time student is well-behaved) ^ (Class size).

Lazear's model provides some striking insights when it is used to calculate the amount of learning time available in classes of different sizes with different levels of disruptions. The model makes it clear that even low levels of disruption significantly reduce the amount of time available for learning for all economically feasible class sizes.

For example, if, on average, each student in a class of 10 is disruptive just 1 percent of the time, the time available for learning in the class is only 90 percent. If the disruption level rises to 3 percent, the available learning time drops to 74 percent; at a 5 percent level of disruption, only 60 percent of class time is available for learning.

The fall-off in available learning time with increasing levels of disruption is even more striking at higher class sizes. With a class size of 25, just over three-quarters of class time (78 percent) is available for learning with a 1 percent disruption level. With a 5 percent disruption level, the available learning time plummets to just over a quarter of class time (28 percent).

Discipline a Substitute for Class Size

"Discipline is a substitute for class size," states Lazear, explaining that the same amount of learning time may be achieved either by reducing class size or by enforcing stricter discipline in the classroom. For example, if class size is reduced from 25 to 20, the gain in learning time is always smaller than that produced by reducing the level of disruption by one percentage point.

This has significant policy implications, since the cost of reducing class size is very large, while the cost of educating a teacher on improved classroom management is quite low.

Eric Hanushek, an expert on class size research and also an economist at the Hoover Institution, interprets Lazear's findings as being consistent with his views on the importance of teacher quality; Hanushek regards ability to manage the classroom as one of the big elements of teacher quality.

"If you think of teacher quality as affecting the amount of disruptions, which then has these important externalities of taking up classroom time, then a lot of that all fits together and I agree with it completely," he said.

"[T]he cost of reducing class size is very large, while the cost of educating a teacher on improved classroom management is quite low."

For more information…

WWW Edward Lazear's paper, "Educational Production," will appear in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. A preliminary version is available at **www.hoover.stanford.edu/publications/digest/001/lazear.html.**

Chaotic Classrooms

"In our few years in this school system, in both my younger and older child's classrooms, disruption never seems to abate and learning is constantly impeded. A handful of kids are always utterly unable to stay seated in their chairs or hold their pencils for more than a few seconds. My kids have come home with headaches from the effort of trying to filter out the chaos and absorb information. . . . Can't I re-route my tax money to benefit my own family, rather than subsidize the parking of delinquents at the principal's door?"

A mother with two children in a "quality" suburban school system, quoted by Dennis Byrne, *Chicago Tribune*, February 26, 2001

"[Teacher L3] dwelled on topics with individual students for long periods of time while the rest of the class fidgeted, talked, and distracted each other. In determining for how many days school had been in session, for example, she carried on a dialogue with one student for 5 minutes at the front of the rug area. The other students appeared bored and many carried on side conversations.

The discipline techniques teacher L3 used were positive and humane (e.g. "James, when I hear you talking, I can't hear Michael."), but they were mostly ineffective in bringing about desired results. Not only did students talk among themselves; some left the group to wander about the room."

From the December 2000 report on Wisconsin's SAGE small class-size program Center for Education Research, Analysis, and InnovationSchool of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

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From Left: Mary Ann Sullivan, David Harris, Delores Brents, Rev. Dr. Michael Brown

Black Alliance Is on the Move

New Indiana chapter hosts education reform conference

BY BARATO BRITT

Recognizing that time is of the essence where the education of children is concerned, the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) has moved quickly over the past year to encourage the creation of a national network of state and city chapters. The chapter structure allows local community leaders to focus on local solutions to the national crisis in achievement among minority students from low-income families.

A similar sense of urgency possesses BAEO chapters: Two months after the formation of BAEO's Indiana chapter in May, the organization hosted its first education reform conference, in Indianapolis.

The national Black Alliance group was formed in early 2000, held its first national conference almost immediately, launched a public information campaign in November 2000 to educate parents about school choice, and soon will move its national headquarters from Milwaukee to the nation's capital. BAEO now has 20 chapters established or developing in cities across the U.S.

A $1.3 million campaign involving television, radio, and print media is well underway in Washington, DC, where it has attracted criticism from more established African-American advocacy groups, such as the NAACP and the National Alliance of Black School Educators, which oppose vouchers. In Indiana, too, chapter organizers report the primary opposition has come from local black organizations with long traditions of advocacy in the African-American community. On the bright side, recent passage of an unusually strong charter school law in Indiana has prompted greater public interest in school choice.

"School choice is not about public versus private, it's about empowering parents."

VIRGINIA WALDEN FORD
DIRECTOR, DC PARENTS FOR SCHOOL CHOICE
NATIONAL BAEO BOARD MEMBER

"We fully understand the politics behind this movement," said Joe Epps, chairman of the Indianapolis Black Chamber of Commerce and a board member of BAEO of Indiana. "We will work with who we can and where we can. At the end of the day, this is about the children, not political agendas."

Flake Keynotes July Outreach Event

The Black Chamber of Commerce cosponsored BAEO of Indiana's July 16 outreach conference, "Education Reform and the Black Community: Understanding Your Options." The Indiana Black Expo, Light of the World Christian Church, the Urban Christian Schools Coalition, and *The Indianapolis Recorder* were also cosponsors.

Held in conjunction with the week-long Indiana Black Expo Summer Celebration, the day-long BAEO event drew attendees from across the state and culminated with the Expo's annual Ecumenical Service. This was keynoted by former Congressman Rev. Floyd Flake, president of Edison Charter Schools and a member of BAEO's national board of directors.

"We needed a forum to show African Americans in this state that there is a national movement to change the state of education in our communities, and it's not just a voucher movement," said Jackie Cissell, president of BAEO of Indiana. "Our goal was to present all of the issues we support in a manner which people would feel comfortable asking tough questions. We also wanted to show our community that we are here as their resource and advocate."

Indiana's charter school law, approved in May, permits potential school organizers to seek sponsorship from local school boards, public universities, and the mayor of Indianapolis. Assistant Deputy Mayor David Harris explained to conference attendees that Mayor Bart Peterson was the only mayor in the country to be given that authority. Peterson wants to see mayor-sponsored schools up and running by the 2002-2003 academic year.

As well as charter schools, conference panelists provided information on a broad range of education reform options such as school vouchers, privately funded scholarship programs, education tax credits, and homeschooling. Indianapolis Public Schools board members Delores Brents and Michael Brown explained that the city's public schools had a variety of options for students, such as magnet schools, but acknowledged many parents were not aware of all the options.

Panelists providing a national perspective on education reform included national BAEO board member Lawrence Patrick, a Detroit-based lawyer who specializes in school law; Virginia Walden Ford, director of DC Parents for School Choice and also a national BAEO board member; Joyce Burges, of the National Black Home Educators Resource Association, based in Baker, Louisiana; and *School Reform News* Managing Editor George Clowes.

"We have to stand up and support quality education for our children," declared Ford. "School choice is not about public versus private, it's about empowering parents."

This echoed a theme established by BAEO president and CEO Kaleem M. S. Caire at the start of the conference. He made it clear school choice for low-income black families is the primary focus of the organization. The dollars need to follow the child, he explained. When the dollars follow the child to a school of choice, that school is much more responsive to parents and it has money for maintenance and textbooks.

BAEO president and CEO Kaleem M.S. Caire welcomes participants to July's outreach conference.

"Parents should be the ones who decide where their children attend school," said Caire. "Their child is their responsibility and no one else's."

But school choice advocacy is not the only goal of BAEO of Indiana, according to president Cissell. The organization aims to become a resource and advocate for parents in a number of ways: helping them solve problems they encounter with their public school system; facilitating communications within the black community; and improving communications between parents and legislators. Electronic and fax communications already go out to over 2,000 people weekly.

"We do not want to be just another organization that agitates for black people," said Cissell. "We want to give citizens in this state an organization that is proactive in its approach, and effect some real changes."

Barato Britt is executive director of BAEO of Indiana. His email address is bbritt@iquest.net.

Black Leadership Concerns

"I think that black leaders are, in fact, very concerned about representing their constituents. They know that their constituents are in the worst schools in our country. They know that those schools aren't getting any better. It's been decades and decades and decades of promises that have not been realized. In the meantime, whole generations of kids are being lost. A lot of black males wind up in prison. . . . I think they are very deeply concerned about this.

"And while the older generation has an abiding faith in the government to help solve their problems, government has not solved this problem. And I think it's a short step to recognition that, in this case, choice plans that are controlled by them . . . would provide their constituents with new educational options. And if existing leaders won't do that, I think the new younger leaders will."

Terry M. Moe, author of *Schools, Vouchers and the American Public*

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Warning to Middle-School Teachers: Science Texts Unreliable

Study finds popular science textbooks riddled with errors

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Almost everyone knows East from West, so it's unlikely any middle-school science teachers or their students would be misled by the compass displayed in the 2000 and 2001 editions of Prentice Hall's *Science Explorer*, which has East and West reversed.

But what about the statement in the 1996 edition of Addison-Wesley's *Science Insights* that the magnetic pole located in the Arctic is the Earth's magnetic north pole? In fact, it's the magnetic south pole.

Unfortunately, these are not the only errors to be found in middle-school science textbooks. A recent study of the 12 physical science textbooks most commonly used in U.S. middle schools turned up not just one or two mistakes but *hundreds* of factual errors—in each book. And each contained diagrams representing impossible situations, plus descriptions of experiments that couldn't possibly work.

"The science textbooks found in most American classrooms are, in a word, atrocious," concluded the study's author, North Carolina State University physics professor John L. Hubisz. "They are riddled with errors, sloppy thinking and glitzy illustrations that illustrate little in the way of actual science."

If all middle-school teachers were trained in science, these errors could be noted and corrected for students, but that's hardly the case. Four out of five middle-school science teachers didn't take any physical science courses in college and so are unlikely to correct the kind of nonsense or sloppy expression that appears in many textbooks:

- Nonsense: According to the Bernoulli principle, air moves faster over the top of a wing in order to arrive at the back end at the same time as the air that went under the wing (page 98 of *Science Insights*).
- Random meanings of the word "electricity:" In one sentence, it means "energy," in another it means "electric current," and elsewhere it means "electric charge" (Chapter 11 of *Science Insights*).
- Nonsense: Birds aren't electrocuted when they perch on high voltage wire because each of the bird's claws is in contact with only a small portion of the wire (*Science Links*, South-Western Educational Publishing, 1998).
- Inconsistency: On page 422, readers are informed that "sound travels faster through warm air than through cold air," but on page 434 they are told "sound travels faster in colder air" (*Focus on Physical Science*, Merrill Publishing Co., 1989).

"A recent study of the 12 physical science textbooks most commonly used in U.S. middle schools turned up not just one or two mistakes but *hundreds* of factual errors—in each book."

For more information…

WWW The full text of John L. Hubisz' textbook report is available at **http://psrc-online.org/curriculum/book.html.**

It's particularly important to get the facts correct at the middle-school level, says Hubisz, because students and adults hold firmly on to conceptions—or misconceptions—they learn early in life. With so many errors in what are supposed to be authoritative textbooks, it's hardly surprising that U.S. eighth-graders rank poorly in international science and math tests, such as the Third International Math and Science Study.

Critical Thinking Impossible

Even some of the critical thinking exercises involve solutions that are impossible to carry out. For example, Prentice Hall's *Exploring Physical Science* poses the following problem: "A barge filled to overflowing with sand approaches a bridge over the river and cannot quite pass under it. Should sand be added to or removed from the barge?" The teacher's manual says to add sand, but if the barge already is "filled to overflowing," that cannot be done.

Surprisingly, Hubisz found textbook publishers remarkably uninterested in his study, with none responding to his letter about the study and none willing to name a company liaison for him to work with. Reviewers also indicated publishers often did not correct reported errors from one edition to the next. In some cases, company officials insisted incorrect diagrams were accurate, and that mis-statements of fact also were accurate.

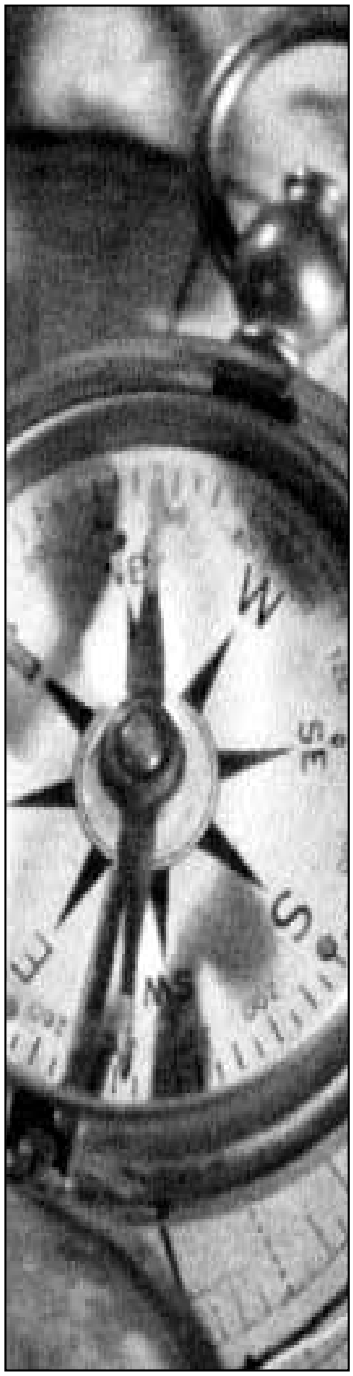
"States and school districts should not have to provide quality control measures for private enterprise publishers whose own procedure is so poor," wrote one reviewer. "However, only those prospective buyers who now check the content have a chance of avoiding the really dumb errors."

Hubisz delivered his final report to the study's sponsor, the Packard Foundation, last October, after reducing some 500 pages of errors to a more readable 98-page report. When news of the study was broadcast in an Associated Press story in early January, Hubisz received 840 requests for copies in the following two weeks. Since posting the report to the Internet in mid-January (at http://psrc-online.org/curriculum/book.html), there have been almost 90,000 accesses.

The study may have raised concerns about other textbooks, too. The Texas Education Agency recently contracted with Texas A&M University for the University's College of Science to produce a detailed report by the end of August on the factual accuracy of the 60 or so textbooks planned for use in the state's middle-school and high school classrooms in the 2002-2003 school year.

What Teachers Should Do

Hubisz's report offers suggestions for what middle-school science teachers can do. His suggestions include forming a network with other teachers and local experts, checking the publisher's Web site and other relevant sites, subscribing to "The Textbook Letter" at ttl@textbookleague.org, and contacting Hubisz himself at Hubisz@unity.ncsu.edu for further information.



Economics Texts Misleading, Too

While inaccurate science textbooks can leave many students in a confusing fog of scientific illiteracy, inaccurate economics textbooks can leave students with the wrong ideas about how the economy works, which could be much more dangerous.

A Mackinac Center study of popular high school economics textbooks used in Michigan classrooms showed many of those influential texts contain gross errors and dangerous myths about the market economy and the role of government.

"I can ride on a roller coaster without understanding centrifugal force . . . Physics can protect me, whether I believe it or not," says economist Todd Buchholz. "But if I ignore basic economics, I could go broke."

The June 1999 study from the Mackinac Center for Public Policy found some textbook authors consistently critical of free enterprise and private property while presenting government intervention as almost always beneficial. Thus, many Michigan students read in their textbooks that competition is dangerous; that Americans are undertaxed; that government spending creates wealth; and that politicians are better at economic planning than entrepreneurs.

For more information…

WWW The June 1999 Mackinac Center study by Burton Folsom, George Leef, and Dirk Mateer, "How Reliable Are Michigan High School Economics Textbooks?" is available at the Center's Web site at **www.mackinac.org/article.asp?ID=1841.**

According to several authors, this statist approach is what publishers want. "They especially want government intervention treated with favor in several chapters in the text," said one author. Another said he would never be able to sell a text that presented too much evidence for free enterprise. Thus, it's not surprising the Mackinac study found only six of 16 popular texts could be graded "A" or "B" for their economic accuracy and freedom from bias.

When one author suggested his text ought to include a discussion of school choice, the publisher responded "as though I had advocated including Satanism in the text" and told the author "to absolutely avoid anything such as school choice that would upset the teacher unions."

"When one author suggested his text ought to include a discussion of school choice, the publisher responded 'as though I had advocated including Satanism in the text.'"

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DEMOCRATS continued from page 1

expenditures in earlier election cycles. (See "Teacher Union Denies Political Activities to IRS," *School Reform News*, September 2000.)

"An Appendage of the Democratic Party"

"The extent to which the NEA and its state affiliates have coordinated their political activities with the Democratic Party, and have used millions of dollars in tax-exempt general revenues to support these activities, is truly breathtaking," stated Landmark President Mark R. Levin when the complaint was filed.

"The evidence Landmark is making public today demonstrates that the NEA has become an appendage of the Democratic Party, complete with an ATM machine that dispenses tax-exempt membership dues to underwrite that party's political activities."

Some of the key documents in the Landmark complaint were provided to the Federal Election Commission as part of a broader four-year investigation into Republican charges of illegal coordination between Democrats and the labor unions, primarily the AFL-CIO and the NEA. The FEC released that information to the public on May 2, 2001, but a request from the Democratic Party and the labor unions resulted in the FEC quickly withdrawing the materials.

Landmark, however, secured copies of the documents before they were withdrawn, as did Associated Press correspondents Larry Margasak and John Solomon.

Gore-Lieberman 2000

The issue of teacher union influence on the views of Democratic political candidates was a major feature of the Presidential primary debate between then-Vice President Al Gore and former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley on February 21, 2000 at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Panelist Tamala Edwards of *Time* magazine pointed out that 60 percent of the African-American community supported vouchers and questioned Gore's "proud" opposition to vouchers while he and his children all were products of private schools.

In a later follow-up question on the same issue, panelist Jeff Greenfield of CNN noted, "one of the staunchest opponents of [school] choice are the two major teachers unions that happen to supply one in nine of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention." At the same time, he continued, there are "tens of thousands of parents, disproportionately black and brown," who do not have the choice of pulling their children out of failing public schools.

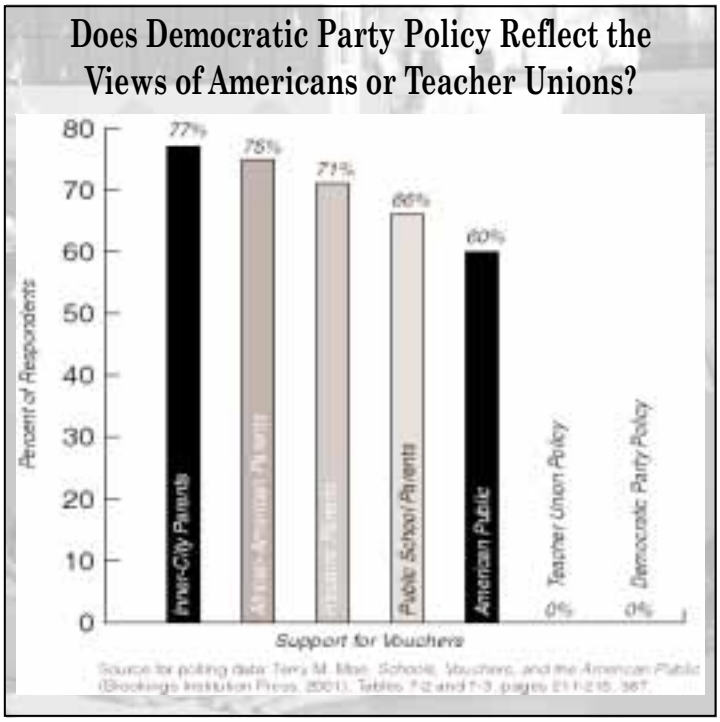
"The question is, after 35 years and $100 billion in Title I money, with [the SAT score gap] no narrower, why shouldn't these parents conclude that the Democratic Party's opposition to choice is an example of supporting a special interest rather than their interest?" asked Greenfield, to applause from the audience.

In response, Gore claimed "it's not the opinion of the NEA and the AFT that's reflected in the policies supported by Democrats, it's the opinion of the overwhelming majority of Americans." (See "Gore's Opposition to Choice Bombs in Harlem," *School Reform News*, April 2000.)

The pro-voucher views of a Democrat became a major issue for the teacher unions when Gore selected Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman as his Vice Presidential running mate last summer. Until then, Lieberman had been one of the few Democrats who voted for vouchers, argued for vouchers, and cosponsored voucher bills. As a result, his voting record in the U.S. Senate consistently received one of the NEA's lowest ratings for Democrats.

For example, in arguing for a 1997 pilot school voucher program for 2,000 children in the nation's capital, Lieberman pointed out that 85 percent of the families living in Washington's wealthiest ward sent their children to private schools. "Is it fair," he asked, for Congress to force the poor and the disenfranchised to send their children to schools that Members of Congress had rejected for their own children?

However, as soon as Lieberman was offered the opportunity to run for national office, he telephoned AFT President Sandra Feldman to assure her that a Gore-Lieberman administration would be anti-voucher, according to *Wall Street Journal* reporter June Kronholtz. NEA officials, who said they expected Lieberman to oppose school vouchers, were not disappointed when the candidate subsequently declared he would "never publicly" support vouchers.



"Apparent Veto Power"

The FEC's final report concluded the AFL-CIO had "apparent veto power" over election decisions made by Democrats and that the unions had "the authority to approve or disapprove plans, projects and needs of the DNC and its state parties with respect to the coordinated campaign." Despite that extensive coordination between the Democrats and the labor unions, the FEC ultimately concluded those activities could be protected under the First Amendment and closed the case.

The union's veto power over Democratic activities it helped finance was acknowledged by AFL-CIO general counsel John Hiatt, who told Margasak and Solomon the union "would want veto power" over what it subsidized.

The Landmark complaint shows how the NEA effected its profound influence over Democratic campaign strategy through its role as a member of the "Coordinated Campaign Steering Committee," which set national and statewide campaign strategy for the election of Democratic candidates. In addition to the NEA and DNC, other members of the Steering Committee were the 1996 Clinton-Gore Campaign, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the Democratic Governors' Association, the Democratic Leadership Campaign Committee, the AFL-CIO, and Emily's List.

Landmark's complaint also reveals the involvement of NEA's state affiliates in coordinating campaign activity with Democratic congressional candidates, specifically citing NEA affiliates in Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Nebraska, Kansas, and Minnesota. The extent to which the NEA coordinated activities and commingled expenditures is illustrated by a document cited by Landmark from the North Carolina campaign to elect Democrat Bobby Etheridge to Congress:

"When the DNC and its national partners, including the…the AFL-CIO and the NEA agree on the contents of a plan, each national partner will give their funding commitment to the state."

Landmark's complaint is the latest phase of the Foundation's five-year investigation and legal research into potential violations of federal tax and election laws by the NEA and its state affiliates. The nonprofit legal organization, which has offices in Kansas City, Missouri and Herndon, Virginia, was founded in 1976. One of its top missions is the promotion of education reform, and it has defended school choice in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

"NEA officials, who said they expected [Vice Presidential candidate Joseph] Lieberman to oppose school vouchers, were not disappointed when the candidate subsequently declared he would 'never publicly' support vouchers."

For more information…

WWW The Landmark Legal Foundation's July 20 IRS complaint, along with earlier complaints to the IRS and FEC, are available at the group's Web site at **www.landmarklegal.org**.

Follow the Money

Just a month before the Landmark Legal Foundation filed its complaint against the National Education Association, Choices for Children, a Michigan-based nonprofit education reform organization, released two studies of the 105th and 106th U.S. Congress showing a strong correlation between campaign contributions from the two major teacher unions—the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers—and votes against school choice plans in Congress.

In the U.S. House, the NEA and AFT donated an average of $24,703 more in campaign contributions to Democrat candidates than to Republicans. In the U.S. Senate, the two unions donated an average of $17,430 more to Democrat candidates than to Republicans. Republicans in both the House and the Senate were much more likely than Democrats to votes in favor of school choice.

"It is disturbing to learn, as these reports indicate, that there is a strong correlation between Members of Congress receiving campaign contributions from the nation's largest teacher unions and these Members' willingness to deny underprivileged children increased educational opportunities," said Choices for Children's Chairman Betsy DeVos. "Underprivileged children trapped in failing schools have found their futures exchanged for campaign cash," she added.

For more information…

WWW Both of the June 21, 2001 reports, *For & Against Parents: A Report Card on School Choice Votes in the 105 and 106th Congress*, are available from the Choices for Children Web site at **www.choicesforchildren.org.**

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NEA Members Rate Vouchers "Not Important"

Survey shows union members disagree with leaders

BY MIKE ANTONUCCI

Although teacher union president Bob Chase delivers an obligatory voucher denunciation in most of his public speeches, a remarkable 61 percent of his members do not consider it important for the union to speak out on the issue of school vouchers, according to a National Education Association membership survey conducted after the November 2000 election.

The survey also showed that NEA members voted for Democratic Congressional candidates over Republican candidates by a margin of almost 2-1, even though only 48 percent identified themselves as Democrats.

Immediately after each two-year election cycle is complete, the NEA commissions a formal survey of its members to discover how they voted and why. The Feldman Group, Inc., a noted Washington, DC public opinion firm, conducted the confidential poll for the most recent election and presented it to NEA officials in December 2000.

Perhaps the most striking response came to a question regarding NEA's position on certain issues. NEA members were read a list of public education issues "that NEA might address in the coming year." Each respondent was asked how important it was "for NEA to speak out on that issue." The question did not ask what position the union should take, but merely if it was important to address the issue.

One of those issues was "Providing private school vouchers to parents whose children attend schools where academic progress is suffering, so parents can send their children to the school of their choice." The results were remarkable. Only 19 percent said it was "very important" for NEA to address this issue, and 19 percent said it was "somewhat important." Another 22 percent thought it was "not very important" and a stunning 39 percent said it was "not at all important."

Of the other nine issues on the list, the next highest figure for "not at all important" was 7 percent, for "testing students every year to measure their progress."

Union Members Tend to Vote Democratic

Forty-eight percent of NEA members identified themselves as Democrats, 24 percent as Republicans, and 28 percent as independents. Asked to describe their political leanings, 10 percent identified themselves as "very liberal," 28 percent as "somewhat liberal," 31 percent as "moderate," 22 percent as "somewhat conservative," and 8 percent as "very conservative."

NEA members supported Al Gore over George W. Bush by a margin of 59 to 34 percent, with an additional 3 percent going to Ralph Nader. This was not appreciably different from 1996, when 62 percent of NEA members voted for Bill Clinton and 31 percent voted for Bob Dole. This is significant only to the extent that Dole was said to have blundered in 1996 by attacking teacher unions in his speech at the Republican National Convention. Bush avoided similar rhetoric in 2000, but that didn't help him much among NEA members.

Gore ran strongest in the Northeast, picking up 72 percent of the NEA vote there to only 19 percent for Bush. Bush was competitive in the Southwest and Mountain states, picking up 45 percent and 41 percent of the NEA vote there, respectively. Retired NEA members were most supportive of Gore (66 percent), while Gore's support was weakest among education support personnel (53 percent).

Congressional races were even more lopsided. NEA members voted for Democratic Congressional candidates over Republicans by a margin of 65 percent to 35 percent. Democrats again held their largest margins of victory in the Northeast, winning the NEA vote 81 to 19 percent. In the Mountain states, Republican Congressional candidates actually won the NEA vote, 53 percent to 47 percent.

Union Influence on its Members' Votes

The Feldman survey also provided important information about how NEA members are responding to the union's political message.

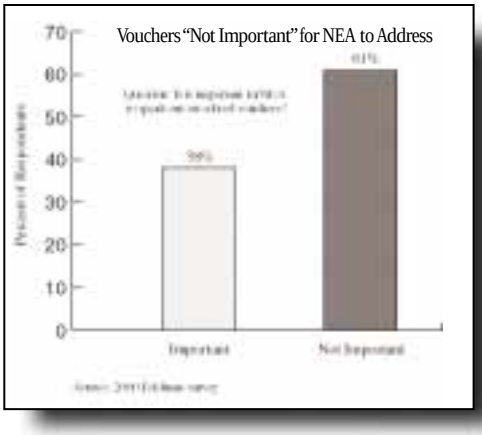
In general, NEA members adhere to the union's positions, but there are some areas of contention. For example, a healthy 57 percent of members said they were more likely to vote for a candidate who has been recommended by NEA, but a significant 27 percent said an NEA recommendation made them *less* likely to vote for that candidate.

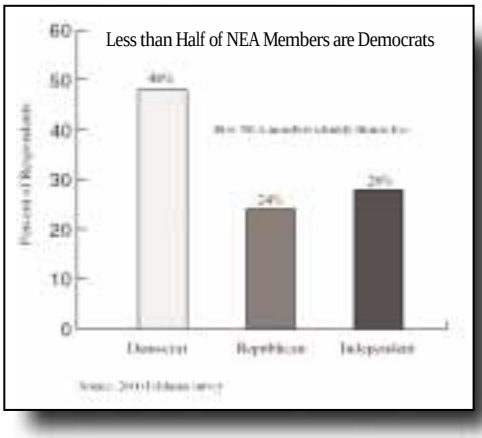
Most members acknowledged receiving information about the 2000 elections from NEA. Sixty-two percent of NEA Democrats believe the union presented information on candidates in a fair and balanced way, while only 25 percent of Republicans and 36 percent of independents thought so.

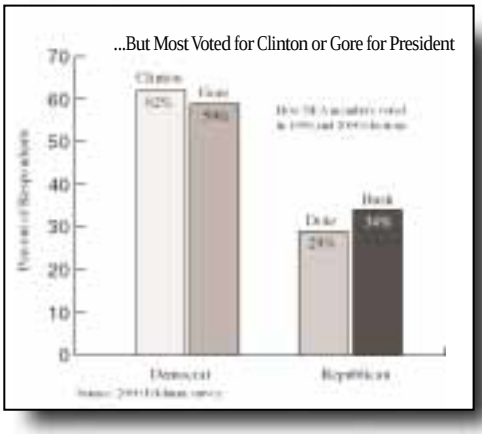
Despite much rhetoric from NEA headquarters about reaching out to Republicans, only 5 percent of members saw the union as less partisan in 2000 compared to past years. Eighteen percent saw NEA as more partisan, and 70 percent thought its partisanship was about the same.

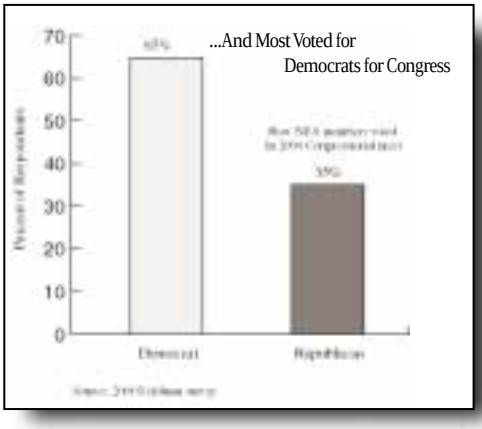
The survey confirms that NEA members agree with much of the union's public education agenda. We can also safely assume most NEA members oppose school vouchers. What the Feldman survey does tell us, however, is that placed on a list of 10 issues for NEA to address, school vouchers came in last—and by a large margin.

Mike Antonucci is director of The Education Intelligence Agency, an organization that conducts public education research, analysis and investigations. His weekly Communiqué is available at ***http://members.aol.com/educintel/eia*** *or from EducIntel@aol.com.*









Teachers Shortchanged by Education Bureaucracy

Twelve states have more bureaucrats than teachers

The Education Intelligence Agency recently issued a report that presents education statistics from a different angle, ranking states and school districts by measures such as teacher compensation as a percentage of instructional spending, number of classroom teachers per district-level administrator, and teacher salary as a percent of the average worker's salary.

Many of the tables in that report, *Tribute for a Light: Public Education Finances and Staffing*, raise provocative questions about the way certain states or districts are allocating resources to public education.

For example, one table gives a breakdown of public school employees by occupation and expresses each category as a percentage of the total workforce. Nationally, 52.2 percent of school employees are teachers, but 12 states actually have fewer teachers than non-teachers in their public education workforce. Only 44.5 percent of Michigan's public school employees are teachers, yet it still has fewer aides and school staffers than the national average.

For more information…

WWW The May 2001 report by Mike Antonucci, *Tribute for a Light: Public Education Finances and Staffing*, is available by sending a request with your mailing address to the Education Intelligence Agency via fax at 916/392-1482 or via e-mail at **EducIntel@aol.com**. The report also is available at the Agency's Web site at **http://members.aol.com/educintel/eia/Tributex.html.**

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ACCOUNTABILITY continued from page 1

employs a scale where the lowest possible score is 200, the highest 1,000. It also ranks schools side-by-side on a 10-point scale—one being the worst score and 10 the best. Using a formula developed by the California Department of Education, schools are then assigned indexed "growth targets" to meet the following year.

The program made $96 million available for schools that met or exceeded their growth targets in the first year. Another $96 million from the state's Immediate Intervention/Underperforming Schools program was made available for schools that did not meet their growth targets. Funding under this latter program comes with the stipulation that, should schools continue to fail to meet their targets or fail to demonstrate significant growth, they "may eventually be subject to state sanctions."

In the program's first year, 4,502 schools—over two-thirds of schools in the state—received Governor's Performance Awards, which typically ranged from $20,000 to $50,000. Some schools received upwards of $170,000.

"We set the bar higher for every school by holding each one accountable for the only thing that really matters: improved student achievement," said Governor Gray Davis in his January 2000 State of the State address. "And we focused like a laser on the gateway skill: reading."

But a number of Governor's Performance Awards were given to schools that in fact had dropped to a lower decile—and in some cases to the lowest decile—from one year to the next.

Fun with numbers

What allows these schools to be cast in a more positive light by state officials is that the Performance Awards also reward growth among what the state deems to be "similar schools" and also among certain "numerically significant" ethnic or demographic subgroups within the school.

For example, in Santa Clara County's Alum Rock Union Elementary School District, Harry Slonaker Elementary slipped from the second-lowest decile among all schools statewide in 1999 to the lowest in 2000. Ranked against "similar" schools, it scored a 2 in both years, next to the bottom. As a reward for such dubious "achievement," Slonaker was granted a $43,247 Governor's Performance Award for 2000-2001.

The two schools that received that district's highest Governor's Performance Awards, Cesar Chavez Elementary and Lee Mathson Middle School, remained in the lowest-performing category statewide for both years. But Mathson received $48,693 and Chavez was awarded $47,236 in the program's first apportionment.

Several other important questions have been raised about California's Academic Performance Index. A 2000 study by California Parents for Educational Choice (CAPE), for example, pointed out that some school districts inappropriately distributed advance copies of test questions or excluded large numbers of students from different test sections. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that much of the test score increases reported by the San Francisco Unified School District could be attributed to the exclusion of increasing numbers of students, whose test scores were thus excluded from school totals.

Don Soifer is executive vice president of the Lexington Institute. His email address is soifer@lexingtoninstitute.org.

Now Schools Get Report Cards, Just Like Students

New Web site provides easy access to school ratings

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

A key element in bringing about a competitive education industry is falling into place thanks to the Internet.

Parents whose children attend government schools often lack a reliable source of information on how their child's school compares to others in the region or state. Moreover, polls consistently show parents are reluctant to criticize their local schools.

A new Heritage Foundation Web site may be the answer parents are looking for. *Www.heritage.org/reportcards* provides access to school rating reports not only for parents seeking information on schools they might want to put their child into, but also for those seeking more information on the school their child already is in.

Compiled by Heritage education analyst Thomas Dawson and researcher Mira Zawadzki, "Report Card Report: America's Best Web Sites for School Profiles," is a valuable resource not only for parents, but also educators and lawmakers.

The Heritage report card Web site provides links to scores of Web sites that provide a range of information on schools in districts across the nation, including academic rankings, test scores, student-teacher ratios, enrollment totals, per-student expenditures, and percentages of special-education students.

Thirty-three states already post school information online; Dawson expects the rest to follow suit, as legislation now being considered by Congress would require states to issue such report cards.

For each state, the Heritage site presents links to a list of sites that provide information about schools in the state. Parents in California, for example, will find there are three other report cards on the state's public schools in addition to the ones produced by the California Department of Education. Those additional reports are produced by an ad-hoc group called the Education Data Partnership; a nonprofit organization known as Great Schools; and a parent-run group, School Wise Press.

In Michigan, the Web site provides a link to the new Standard & Poor's School Evaluation Service, which unveiled its comprehensive reports on all of the state's public schools in May. The service, available at www.ses.standardandpoors.com, just added reports for the state's charter schools.

Pennsylvania has contracted with S&P for the production of similar reports, which not only provide data on school test scores, costs, staffing, and demographics, but also give a written evaluation of how each school's academic and financial statistics compare with similar schools in the state.

Grading the Grades

The Heritage Web site is likely to be updated as improved presentations of the basic state report card data are developed by other organizations. For example, the *Chicago Sun-Times*' compact school report cards at www.sun-times.com/schools make Illinois school data much more comprehensible than the nine-page reports on each school from the Illinois Department of Education.

One statistic that would add value to all report cards is the cost per finished student: the percentage of students who graduate meeting state standards divided by the average cost per student. (See "New Measure Calculates Cost Per Prepared Student," *School Reform News*, September 1998.)

Dawson and Zawadzki aim to improve report card development by assigning grades to current school report cards. They list what they consider to be the top 10 Internet-based school report cards. All of them use different approaches, but each contains accessible, easy-to-understand information.

Top 10 School Report Cards

The Heritage Foundation's Top 10 Internet-based school report cards.

Rank/State	Source	Grade	Web site
1 Colorado	State of Colorado	A-	www.state.co.us/schools/accountability_report.htm
1 50 states by fall	Great Schools	A-	www.greatschools.net
1 California	School Wise Press	A-	www.schoolwisepress.com
4 Kentucky	State of Kentucky	B+	www.kde.state.ky.us/comm/commrel/school_report_card/
4 Pennsylvania	State of Pennsylvania	B+	www.paprofiles.org
4 Arizona	State of Arizona	B+	www.ade.state.az.us/srcs/
4 Colorado	Parent Information Center The Independence Institute	B+	www.parentinfocenter.org
8 Texas	Just for the Kids	B	www.just4kids.org
8 Georgia	Georgia Public Policy Foundation	B	www.gppf.org
10 Milwaukee	EPIC University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	B-	www.uwm.edu/EPIC/

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How SF Parents Saved Edison School

Grassroots effort silenced teacher union opposition

BY GARY LARSON

After parents rejected a bid by Edison Schools, Inc. to run five failing public schools in New York City, Reuters reported in early July that the nation's largest school management company was hoping to learn a better grassroots approach from its new acquisition partner, LearnNow, Inc., which has a record of encouraging community participation.

Yet the success of community efforts in San Francisco to keep the Edison company running a public school in that city indicates it is parents, not company executives, who must recognize how effective their grassroots efforts are in the struggle to advance school choice.

It's no secret that recent examples of education reform have been met with determined opposition, primarily from the teacher unions. Opponents of reform have found it relatively easy to convince parents that embracing change is even riskier than keeping their children in a failing school environment. That wasn't the case with the group Parents to Save Edison Charter, whose determined efforts silenced the critics and ultimately saved their charter school.

"Parents to Save Edison Charter quickly garnered 98 percent of the teachers' signatures on the petition . . . [and by] late April, over 80 percent of Edison parents had signed the petition."

Lessons Learned

The leaders of Parents to Save Edison Charter—Linda Gausman, Lupe Hernandez, and Heather Mobley—believe there are several lessons to be drawn from their battle with the school board.

The first is that by being proactive and taking the initiative, parents were able to control the terms of the debate. That kept the school board on the defensive and blunted its attack on the charter school.

Perhaps the most powerful lesson learned was that vocal support from parents can virtually shut down the normally strong opposition of teacher unions to any change to the traditional model of public school management.

"The unions were silent because they were fearful of taking on something that had made parents so happy," said Gausman. "The school board expected their natural allies to rush to their aid, but they didn't, because they would not publicly stand up against a unified group of parents."

The Contract

In 1998, management of the school—then known as Thomas Edison Elementary and one of the worst schools in the San Francisco Unified School District—was handed over to Edison Schools under a five-year charter contract. In short order, Edison turned the school around with improvements that included renovations, wiring for the Internet, a rigorous curriculum, an extended school day, new art and music programs, and higher pay for teachers.

Within three years, test scores improved dramatically. Between the 1999 and 2000 school years, African-American and Hispanic students at the school posted some of the highest average gains in the state for SAT 9 test scores. Compared to a district-wide improvement in test scores of only 3 percent, Hispanic students at Edison improved by 15 percent and African-American students by 25 percent. Parents were very satisfied with the education their children were receiving.

Feeling Betrayed

But on March 27, after gaining a pro-union majority in the November 2000 election, the San Francisco School Board declared its intention to revoke the charter contract with Edison and return the school to district management.

Feeling betrayed, a group of parents decided to fight the revocation and launched an aggressive campaign to "stop the district's power grab," as they called it. They quickly formed Parents to Save Edison Charter, created a Web site at www.edisonaction.org, and mobilized community support.

"At first, we weren't sure exactly what we were doing," admitted Hernandez, a mother of two Edison students. "All we knew is that we were not going to let the board take our children and place them back into a failing system."

Many parents, initially believing the school board to be misinformed, attended public school board meetings to tell the board about the school's success stories, but they were constantly rebuffed. While acknowledging school improvements, school board members openly told the press and the public they were "philosophically opposed to for-profit education." At one meeting, School Board President Jill Wynns read a newspaper while one of the parents urged her not to revoke the charter.

"It was obvious at that point that they had their minds made up," stated Gausman, mother of an Edison third-grader. "Our children were their last concern, and we knew that we had a fight on our hands."

On the Offensive

The parents then went on the offensive, deciding to organize a public march on the school board to demonstrate broad support for the Edison school before June 27, when the school board planned on voting to revoke the charter. In mid-April, the parents initiated a petition drive to ask the school board to renew Edison's charter, aiming to get signatures from every teacher and every parent with a child at the school.

"Here was a school board that knew they were going to return our children to the failing district," said Mobley, mother of two Edison children. "We wanted to get them on record as being obstructionists by watching them defy the wishes of every parent and teacher at the school."

Parents to Save Edison Charter quickly garnered 98 percent of the teachers' signatures on the petition but found that contacting every charter school parent was more difficult, since many children were bused in from remote parts of the city. Newsletters were sent home with students and dozens of parents organized outreach programs and phone banks. By late April, over 80 percent of Edison parents had signed the petition.

"Our children were their last concern, and we knew that we had a fight on our hands."

LINDA GAUSMAN, PARENT

The March

Preparations then turned to planning the march, scheduled for June 5 to provide time for three weeks of aggressive campaigning before the board vote on June 27. Money raised from community supporters funded banners, posters, and red t-shirts with the slogan, "Our Children, Our Choice." The three Edison mothers —Gausman, Hernandez, and Mobley—all articulate and passionate, served as spokeswomen for the group.

More than 300 parents, teachers, and supporters assembled at San Francisco's Civic Center on June 5. As hundreds of politically inexperienced parents began their march through the city to School District headquarters, they were transformed into militant activists, fighting for their children's futures. They chanted, "We're angry with the Board . . . We will not be ignored," and their signature slogan, "Our Children, Our Choice."

"President Wynns, it is time for you to let our children go!" cried Hernandez as she and Gausman led the crowd into the school board meeting. After presenting the stack of petitions to an obviously stunned Wynns, dozens of supporters and parents provided impromptu testimony to the school board.

"I don't know if this school board knew what hit them," stated Gausman.

Victory at Last

Over the next two weeks, board members were hit with a coordinated campaign of emails, faxes, and letters in support of the charter school. The break came on June 21 with news that the board was negotiating with Edison to keep the school in place.

Finally, the San Francisco School Board voted to transfer sponsorship of the school to the California State Board of Education, an action the state board approved on July 12.

"Standing up for our children allowed us to take back our school and our children," said Gausman, beaming with pride.

Gary Larson, a resident of San Francisco, was the advisor to Parents to Save Edison Charter. His email address is garyllarson@hotmail.com.

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Charter School Update

At its annual Representative Assembly in Los Angeles in July, the National Education Association adopted a new policy on charter schools that would force charters to operate much like traditional public schools … without the benefit of access to tax dollars to pay for startup and construction.

The new policy reaffirmed the union's opposition to granting charters to for-profit companies.

"We do not believe that charter schools ought to exist just as a choice," said Eddie Davis, chairman of the NEA Special Committee on Charter Schools, when presenting the committee's report to the delegates.

The new union policy would prohibit the creation of single-sex charter schools by insisting on "equitable, non-discriminatory admission procedures." The policy's other provisions for charter schools include:

- hiring only certified teachers;
- allowing teachers to keep their collective bargaining rights;
- carrying out the same student tests as traditional public schools;
- having sufficient funds for startup and construction without relying heavily on tax revenue.

"They like charter schools as long as they look and act like public schools," observed Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Education Reform.

Local Affiliate Sees Benefits to Corporate Charters

In May, the Education Intelligence Agency exclusively exposed how the Pennsylvania State Education Association last November had adopted a task force report outlining a new strategy for bringing charter school employees "under the umbrella of collective bargaining."

The task force viewed corporations operating multiple charter schools as an opportunity to create cost-effective statewide bargaining units.

The task force report pointed out that, while only one of Pennsylvania's 68 approved charter schools was unionized, the small size of the average charter school—only 16 teachers per school—made representation "not cost-effective." Traditionally, the union had opposed the formation of such schools, but the task force suggested this opposition was unlikely to succeed and could backfire on the union in terms of negative publicity.

"[Charter schools] will continue to extend their reach because they provide an expanded range of consumer choices and also provide options for students who are not fitting well into their regular public schools," wrote the report's authors.

"[Charter schools] will continue to extend their reach because they provide an expanded range of consumer choices and also provide options for students who are not fitting well into their regular public schools."
PSEA TASK FORCE

For more information…

WWW The Pennsylvania State Education Association's November 30, 2000 23-page report, "Report of the Charter Schools Strategic Options Project," is available from the Education Intelligence Agency by emailing a request to **Educintel@aol.com**.

Since this type of outsourcing had led to a decline in union membership in other industries, the task force recommended establishing the objective of organizing all charter school employees. "If we lose our grip on the labor supply to the education industry, we will bargain from a position of weakness," declared the task force.

However, corporations like Edison Schools, Inc. could provide a framework to resolve this problem for the union. Edison operates multiple charter schools in the same state, a situation the task force viewed as an opportunity to consolidate charter school employees into a single statewide bargaining unit. The task force checked out Edison's business plan—making a profit by reducing administrative expenses—and found it viable.

"In short, PSEA hopes the future will bring us a 'local' NEA affiliate—an Edison Schools Education Association—that would represent the employees who work for Edison statewide … perhaps even nationwide," noted Education Intelligence Agency director Mike Antonucci.

www.heartland.org

A Word to Our Readers

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Charter School Facilities & Finance

The two biggest problems in charter school development have been identified as facilities and finance. With this column, School Reform News *aims to bring its readers the newest ideas on solving these problems.*

Where to Find Money for Startup

BY MARK HOWARD

As with any other business startup, charter schools need funds to pay for developing and staffing the facility … even before the first paying customer walks in the door. This requires finding lenders to fund the start-up expenses.

The two types of funding for a school are equity—the money the operator invests in the school—and debt—the money a third party lends to the school. Equity can take the form of tax-deductible contributions to a building fund, grants from foundations, corporate or business contributions, and funds provided by the board of directors.

Loans are available through many different sources, but the most common is the local bank. Other sources are awards from the new federal charter school facilities financing demonstration program, and bond issues.

Bank Loans

When purchasing a home, the buyer puts up part of the purchase price—the down payment, or equity—and then turns to a local bank for the balance—the mortgage, or debt.

While banks are familiar with lending money for homes, most are uncertain about the viability of charter schools. However, the federal Community Reinvestment Act requires banks to invest in the communities they service. It is important for the charter school operator to communicate to the bank the benefits the school will bring to the community.

Since a bank is more likely to approve a loan to a new business if its exposure is reduced by a third-party guarantee to pay off the loan, the charter school operator should investigate the opportunity to obtain a guarantee for all or part of the loan. These guarantees may be obtained from the local school board, from members of the board of directors of the charter school, or from the federal government.

The federal government guarantee may be obtained from several different agencies. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has a guarantee program for communities with populations under 50,000. The USDA guarantee has no loan limits and, in most cases, covers 80 percent of the loan.

With a third-party guarantee, plus the added bonus of earmarking the loan as a Community Reinvestment Act loan, the bank has strong incentives to lend the funds.

Federal Demonstration Program

The Federal Charter School Facilities Financing Demonstration Program was approved in December 2000 with a $25 million allocation to the U.S. Department of Education. The intent of the program is to test strategies for making facility financing more affordable and more readily available to charter schools.

The DoE has requested applications from prospective lenders who would implement new ideas for facilities financing. The program is expected to be operational after November 2001, when charter schools may apply for awards from the designated lenders.

Bond Issues

Bond financing is cost-prohibitive for most charter schools. The relatively high cost of creating the bond makes this financing vehicle inappropriate for schools with small debt requirements. However, when the financing needs of a number of schools can be "pooled" into a larger group, a bond issue can be made cost-effective. This form of charter school financing is used in Colorado.

"[C]harter schools need funds to pay for developing and staffing the facility . . . even before the first paying customer walks in the door."

Other Options

Private companies are beginning to assist charter schools by creating pools of loans from schools in many different areas. Two companies that can assist in this regard are Carty & Company in Memphis, Tennessee (phone 800/767-8940) and Ford and Associates in Tampa, Florida (phone 813/902-0250).

Other sources for information on charter school financing are The Charter Friends National Network at www.charterfriends.org, and Self Help at www.self-help.org.

Mark Howard has specialized in the development of commercial properties since 1980. He owns and operates M.H. Realty Associates, Inc. in Tamarac, Florida. Readers with questions on facilities and finances are encouraged to contact him directly at mgfl@aol.com. The most frequent questions about common problems will be included in future columns.

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Children First AMERICA

parental choice in education

September 2001

Florida's School Choice Success Story

What if you could spend the state's education dollars allocated to your child at any school you choose?

Florida's Educational Freedom

by Dr. Tina Dupree

Dr. Tina Dupree
Director, FloridaChild

The Curtis family (right) is among thousands of parents we help gain access to better schooling through FloridaChild where I serve as Director. Their daughter Kenya (middle) has Cerebral Palsy and needed more than the public schools offered. We are in business to help families like this. Every day of my life is filled with challenges and opportunities to help Floridians gain educational freedom.

Inside you can learn more about FloridaChild and how we empower low-income parents with access to schools they never dreamed their children could attend. Florida, in fact, is farther along in offering educational freedom—the right of parents to choose their children's schools—than any other state in the nation. Consider:

- The A+ Accountability and Opportunity Scholarships allow Florida parents whose children attend failing schools to redirect any education dollars the state allocates to their child to a public, private, or religious school of their choice.
- The McKay Scholarship Program for Children with Special Needs provides publicly funded vouchers that allow public school children with disabilities (physical and learning) to attend a non-public school to obtain the special educational services they need.
- A growing number of privately funded voucher programs, including FloridaChild, provide low-income families with grants they can spend at any public, private, or religious school. And with a bold new tax credit program having just passed the Florida State Legislature, we can expect many more of these programs to form in the next two years.

These great programs did not happen overnight. Many dedicated Floridians worked hard to win school choice for many of our state's families. And many courageous public officials fought to overcome opposition to the choice concept. I thank them, and I especially thank *Children First America.* For the last seven years this great organization worked alongside many Floridians bringing expertise and guidance that allowed us to create a climate for public policy change. It worked, and the winners are children and parents across this state.

For Kenya Curtis (below center), school choice meant a special need would be met.

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Three types of vouchers define educational freedom for Florida's children and their families

Khaliah Richardson's A+ Opportunity Scholarship: *Relief from failing schools in Florida*

Khaliah Richardson's teachers at Spencer Bibbs Elementary School in Pensacola told single mother, Tracy Richardson, her daughter was disruptive, and pressured Tracy to have her put on medication. This, in spite of the fact that school psychiatrists evaluated Khaliah on five separate occasions but tests never found anything wrong.

Finally, Tracy made an unannounced visit to her daughter's classroom and found the students assembled in "reading groups." But rather than reading books, the students were listening to rap music. When Tracy asked why the students were listening to rap music, she was told "that's what they want to listen to." The problem was not her daughter, but a school that did not work.

Hope renewed for both Khaliah and Tracy, when the young mother bumped into lawyers from the Institute for Justice while working at a hotel. The IJ team was looking for directions to Spencer Bibbs Elementary School, which was one of the schools to have failed the A+ accountability standards twice. Tracy first learned about the possibility of using an Opportunity Scholarship from this chance encounter. Tracy researched the A+ Opportunity Scholarship Program and decided to use a scholarship to enroll her daughter in a private Montessori school.

"The Opportunity Scholarship has been a lifesaver for my daughter." There is no bullying or negative peer pressure at her new school, and she is doing much better. Khaliah wants to grow up to be a teacher, and Tracy has little doubt that her daughter will achieve her goals. Although Tracy says she supports the concept of public education, "I'm not willing to wait until they get it together...not when my child is involved."

Kenya Curtis' McKay Scholarship: *Special help for special needs students in Florida*

Selma Curtis is a mother of three, including 8-year-old Kenya, who suffers from Cerebral Palsy. Kenya had been enrolled in special education at a local public school, but her parents were deeply dissatisfied with Kenya's education.

"Kenya was in an IEP (individualized education plan) and we had to coordinate everything through a case worker. We wanted Kenya to receive speech therapy and other services, but the school kept saying that Kenya didn't qualify for this service, and that she didn't deserve that service. It was very frustrating."

Selma learned about the McKay Scholarship Program on Governor Jeb Bush's website. She entered her daughter's information to apply for the scholarship and received a list of schools participating in the program.

Kenya is now enrolled to attend a private rehabilitative school in the Fall. "This school specializes in helping students like Kenya, and I am confident that she will be treated better than she has been in her public school," Selma said. Selma says she thinks the McKay scholarships "are an excellent program" that will force both public and private schools to pay close attention to the needs of students with disabilities.

Private vouchers for the three Smith children: *The right to choose schools upheld in Florida*

Louise Smith's husband was working two jobs in order to pay for one of their children, Jordan, to attend private school. But the couple wanted all three of their children to attend the same school and attain the same quality. "We explored the public schools in our area and found that the State had graded them all 'D' or 'F'," Louise related. Reluctantly, the family sent their children to a local neighborhood school.

"The public school was an academic disaster for Jordan. The teachers wanted to put him into special education, and Destiny was scared to go to school. She told me 'Mommy, they fight and the teachers yell all the time," Louise says. "My youngest daughter was scared, too—it was a struggle to get her to go to school at all— she didn't feel safe."

Facing a new school year, Louise applied to Children's Scholarship Fund Tampa Bay, a privately funded voucher program founded by area businessman, John Kirtley. Her children received grants covering 75% of the tuition for each of her children, which allowed Louise to shop around for a private school for all three children.

They are now enrolled at a private school focusing on performing arts, and the entire family has been thrilled with the results. Jordan's grades and attitude have improved dramatically. Destiny and Ivana are also doing well. Destiny now scores well ahead of her grade level on her standardized tests. Ivana, who would struggle against going to the public school, now insists on going to school.

"Mr. Kirtley's program has made a tremendous difference in our lives. My children are no longer being left behind and instead their talents are being developed. My husband still works two jobs, but the new school has made it seem like we have different children. Their personalities are coming out, and they are going to be successful adults and good citizens."

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Two *Children First America* initiatives that drive Florida's growing educational freedom movement

Floridians for School Choice

Floridians for School Choice rallied in favor of the A+ Accountability Plan.

Floridians for School Choice is the leading nonprofit organization in Florida dedicated to the ideal that every family should have the opportunity to choose their child's school. Under the leadership of Dr. Pat Heffernan, Floridians for School Choice seeks to promote a climate in favor of school choice, working with parents, business leaders and lawmakers. Floridians for School Choice believes that whether rich or poor, those adults who know the child the best, care the most, and are most affected by the success or failure of their decision, should select the school that their child will attend.

Governor Jeb Bush and Children First America's Vice President for Public Affairs Zack Dawes

Floridians for School Choice believes passionately that the family's share of tax funds, already set aside for that child's education, should then be directed to the school chosen by the family—whether it is a public, private or parochial school.

Florida has had school choice at the university level for over two decades. Florida encourages its families to select the college or university that they judge best for their college-aged student. The State then provides those students with tax-funded tuition assistance, whether they have chosen a state university, a private college, or a religiously affiliated institution. The result for Florida is a university system of great strength and diversity, in which the public and private institutions collaborate for the educational benefit of all the citizens. Floridians for School Choice is committed to this same ideal for our elementary and secondary schoolchildren.

Floridians for School Choice's motto:

Let the families choose the schools, let the funds follow the child.

FloridaChild

FloridaChilds PALS (Parent Advocate Leaders) pose with Drs. Dupree and Heffernan. The PALS field calls, letters and emails from all corners of Florida from parents seeking help with the education of their children.

FloridaChild helps Florida families understand and carry out the educational wishes they have for their children. Public and private funds are available to help children learn at all ages from preschool through university—whether they attend public, private or parochial schools. FloridaChild provides Florida parents a resource where they can turn to get immediate, accurate, and practical answers to their questions about the choices they have and the public support available to help their children learn.

FloridaChild has identified what public funds are available to help learners in every program from Head Start to Bright Futures Scholarships, from preschool to university—whether the children are learning in public or private schools, onsite or online, at home or in other settings. FloridaChild also gathers information on charitable grants and scholarships that may be available to help families educate their children as they judge best. FloridaChild makes charitable grants of its own. The program's director Tina Dupree wants families not just to understand but also to experience parental choice in education.

FloridaChild is pursuing its mission by offering the following services:

- To serve as an information center for families on the full range of public funds appropriated for the education of children from birth to age 21.
- To make grants to families to assist their children in preschools, public or private schools, distance learning, or home education.
- To assist families seeking a different school with a quick and simple way to notify officials of their progress or problems.
- To research and present information for citizens and leaders on the amount and effects of the government appropriations to help Florida children learn.
- To provide families with information on legislative developments designed to expand or limit parental discretion over their children's education.
- To provide extensive and useful links to other information and organizations seeking to help families in their effort to raise and educate their children.

All of these services are available to parents by calling 1-800-805-4485, or online at http://www.floridachild.org.

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Florida Leaders who helped create a climate for school choice

Gov. Jeb Bush

Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan

Dr. Tina Dupree

House Speaker Tom Feeney

Dr. Pat Heffernan

Business Leader John Kirtley

Rep. Carlos Lacasa

Rep. Evelyn Lynn

Senate President John McKay

Rep. Joe Negron

Sen. Ken Pruitt

Gov. Jeb Bush. A charter school founder as a private citizen, Jeb Bush swept his passion for education reform into government as Governor. Shortly after Bush took office, it was announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was 52%. Fifty percent of Florida's fourth graders were not able to read at the fourth-grade level. Surveys revealed that over one-third of Florida's ninth graders, about 60,000 students, had a D or F average. Rather than follow the failed strategies of the past, Governor Bush embraced choice and accountability as the underlying building blocks to reforming Florida education. Floridian children will be the main beneficiaries.

Lt. Gov. Frank Brogan. A former classroom teacher, PTA president, dean of students, assistant principal, principal, superintendent and Commissioner of Education, Lt. Governor Brogan is best known for his leadership and commitment to Florida's children. As an Assistant Principal, Brogan once wrestled a discharging gun from the hand of a suicidal student, and he has fought just as hard for education reform since entering politics. Brogan championed the cause of the Bush/Brogan A+ Plan for Education. Brogan can be especially proud that minority students have shown strong test score gains since the inception of A+.

Dr. Tina Dupree. Businesswoman, minister, author and motivational speaker are just some of the words used to describe the dynamic Dr. Dupree, who left her humble beginnings as a maid and began a fascinating career in business and public service when an employer told her three magic words, "You can learn." In addition to running her business, Dr. Dupree has served as the Director of FloridaChild, an organization serving the needs of parents with information and funds to help their children learn. "I'm doing this because I see every child as my grandchild."

House Speaker Tom Feeney. Tom Feeney introduced parental choice in education legislation as a member of the Florida House. The American Legislative Exchange Council selected this bill to be model legislation in 1992, which was the same year it named Feeney "Outstanding Legislative Member of the Year." Feeney, however, was just getting warmed up, and has presided over the reform-minded Florida House since becoming Speaker in 2000.

Dr. Pat Heffernan. The old saying goes that "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" but Dr. Heffernan has done both. A former Lecturer at Cambridge, Heffernan has been the architect of promoting a reform friendly climate in the sunshine state as the President of Floridians for School Choice. Dr. Heffernan believes that whether rich or poor, those adults who know the child the best, care the most, and are most affected by the success or failure of their decision, should select the school that their child will attend.

Business Leader John Kirtley. *Children First America* Board Member, John was instrumental in passing Governor Jeb Bush's A+ Education Reform package in 1999. John serves on the Board of Directors of Floridians for School Choice. John has become a respected education leader in Florida. This year John placed his successful business career on hold, spending much of his time helping to pass a tuition tax credit bill for the school children of Florida, which will help thousands of low-income children attend a school of their parents' choice.

Rep. Carlos Lacasa. When teacher union bosses began to beat the war drums about overcrowding in public schools, Represenative Lacasa introduced a common sense solution—offer vouchers to students in overcrowded schools in order to take advantage of empty private school seats and relieve overcrowding. Mysteriously, the overcrowding crisis disappeared from the legislative agenda of the teacher union bosses.

Rep. Evelyn Lynn. House co-sponsor of the A+ legislation and champion of Florida's Readiness Bill. The Readiness Bill ensures that all Florida preschool education funds will be under the direction of parents. Preschool funds now follow the child to the public, private or parochial school of choice.

Senate President John McKay. A parent of a child with dyslexia, McKay amended the A+ legislation to create a pilot tuition voucher program for children with disabilities, which has been expanded into the statewide McKay Scholarship program. In his Opening Session speech in 2001, McKay championed the tax-credit for scholarships bill stating: "Unfortunately, too often the chances of educational success elude families. We must erase the educational gap that exists for many families struggling to provide opportunities for their children. We will accomplish this by providing more choices, so that everyone, regardless of means, can attain their educational goals."

Rep. Joe Negron. Sponsored and took the lead in debating on behalf of the tax-credit bill giving corporations credit for contributions to private scholarship granting organizations. This was a matter of social justice to Representative Negron, who proved to be an articulate and forceful spokesman for the concept of parental choice in education.

Senator Ken Pruitt. A strong school choice advocate, Senator Pruitt serves as the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and worked to get reforms through the Senate. Floridians have always been able to count on Senator Pruitt to put the interests of the learners above those of education providers.

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Imaginary Evidence Plagues Parental Choice Debate

New Zealand's open enrollment touted as "market competition"

BY JOHN MERRIFIELD

K-12 education reform is the nation's top political issue. Since competition can be a key effect of reforms involving parental choice, there is considerable political and economic pressure—policy impact, fame, and potentially higher book sales—to produce evidence of its effects.

Unfortunately, since the genuine competition that exists in most of our economy does not exist in any contemporary education system, even partial evidence of its effects on K-12 education is scarce.

For a variety of reasons, some researchers thus have tried to manufacture evidence of the effects of competition in K-12 education by pushing contemporary data beyond its considerable limitations.

The effects of small departures from the status quo that allow limited rivalry are generalized to proposals that would transform the system by fostering genuine competition. However, the limited data from such studies cannot possibly reflect the completely new conditions that real competition would produce.

A Case Study in Imaginary Evidence

The best recent example of data stretched into imaginary evidence is *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*, by Helen Ladd and Edward Fiske (L&F).

The L&F book, published in 2000 by the Brookings Institution Press, is about New Zealand's decade-old policy of making each government school into a charter-like institution run largely by parents—but with budget, building, and staffing decisions still made by the Ministry of Education. Parents can enroll their children at any government school with space available.

While it is debatable whether the reformed schools are independent enough to constitute charter schools, the New Zealand policy certainly qualifies as a version of what we would call public school choice. The policy also has much in common with the open enrollment policies of large U.S. city or county school districts where resource allocation decisions effectively remain centralized.

L&F do an excellent job of identifying the New Zealand program's key features, and its effects. But they squander their opportunity to make an even larger contribution to the discussion of public school choice—and they create ammunition for the opponents of parental choice—by imagining that their findings about public school choice are evidence of the effects of full parental choice and real competition. They stretch their important data far beyond its limitations, and they clearly state over-reaching generalizations.

"[T]he genuine competition that exists in most of our economy does not exist in any contemporary education system . . ."

For example, L&F portray New Zealand's program as a "foray into the realm of *full parental choice and competition*" [emphasis added] (p. 250), "a system of parental choice and *market competition*" [emphasis added] (p. 292), and "self-governing schools functioning in a competitive environment" (p. 297). These conclusions are not supported by the authors' description of how the New Zealand program works, which has little in common with textbook descriptions of competitive markets.

Hardly a Competitive Marketplace

Genuine competition requires multiple independent sellers, low barriers for competitors to enter the market, market-determined prices, and the freedom of sellers to expand or contract their offerings according to demand. L&F's thorough description of the New Zealand policy makes it clear none of those key elements is present.

L&F conclude New Zealand reflects the effects of competition even though:

- New Zealand's government is virtually the only "seller," with 96.5 percent of K-12 education being government-run.
- The government strictly controls the supply of schools.
- The government does not duplicate the practices of popular schools.
- The government does not close unpopular schools, and is forcing greater use of unpopular schools by partially re-imposing attendance zones.
- National Education Guidelines are imposed, stifling much of the specialization that a truly free market would produce.
- Enrollment levels, or customer preference, are only one determinant of each school's funding.

Despite the absence of competition in the New Zealand program, L&F conclude market-based school reforms are likely to make the problems of troubled urban schools worse rather than better unless they are accompanied by appropriate policy safeguards. Under what they characterize as competition, many poor families could not exercise choice, enrollment patterns became more stratified by income and ethnic group, and many unpopular schools lacked the management and administrative resources to handle the effects of losing students.

Those regrettable effects attributed to competition—L&F's "Cautionary Tale"—are, in fact, the result of an *absence* of competition. Because influential commentators mislead others by citing it, this imaginary tale about the implications of the New Zealand experience is an emerging political and academic disaster.

For example, a *Wall Street Journal* editorial page article last year by former Labor Secretary Robert Reich and a recent *Education Week* article by Thomas Lasley and William Bainbridge both cited the L&F imaginary tale as strong evidence of what "competition" would mean to K-12 education. A recent book review in *Education Matters* by Harvard's Jennifer Hochschild also trumpeted the relevance of L&F's findings to the public and academic interest in "market dynamics" and market experiments.

"The best recent example of data stretched into imaginary evidence is *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale,* by Helen Ladd and Edward Fiske."

Over-extensions of existing numbers clearly have the potential to disastrously mislead researchers, policymakers, and the public. Scholars can extract real evidence from the scattered historical examples of competition in education reviewed in Andrew Coulson's *Market Education*. However, abundant evidence of the effects of competition in other industries show that its application to K-12 education is not a risky experiment.

John Merrifield is professor of economics at the University of Texas San Antonio and author of The School Choice Wars *(Scarecrow Education Press, 2001). Information about the book is available at* **business.utsa.edu/faculty/jmerrifi/**. *Merrifield's email address is Jmerrifield@utsa.edu.*

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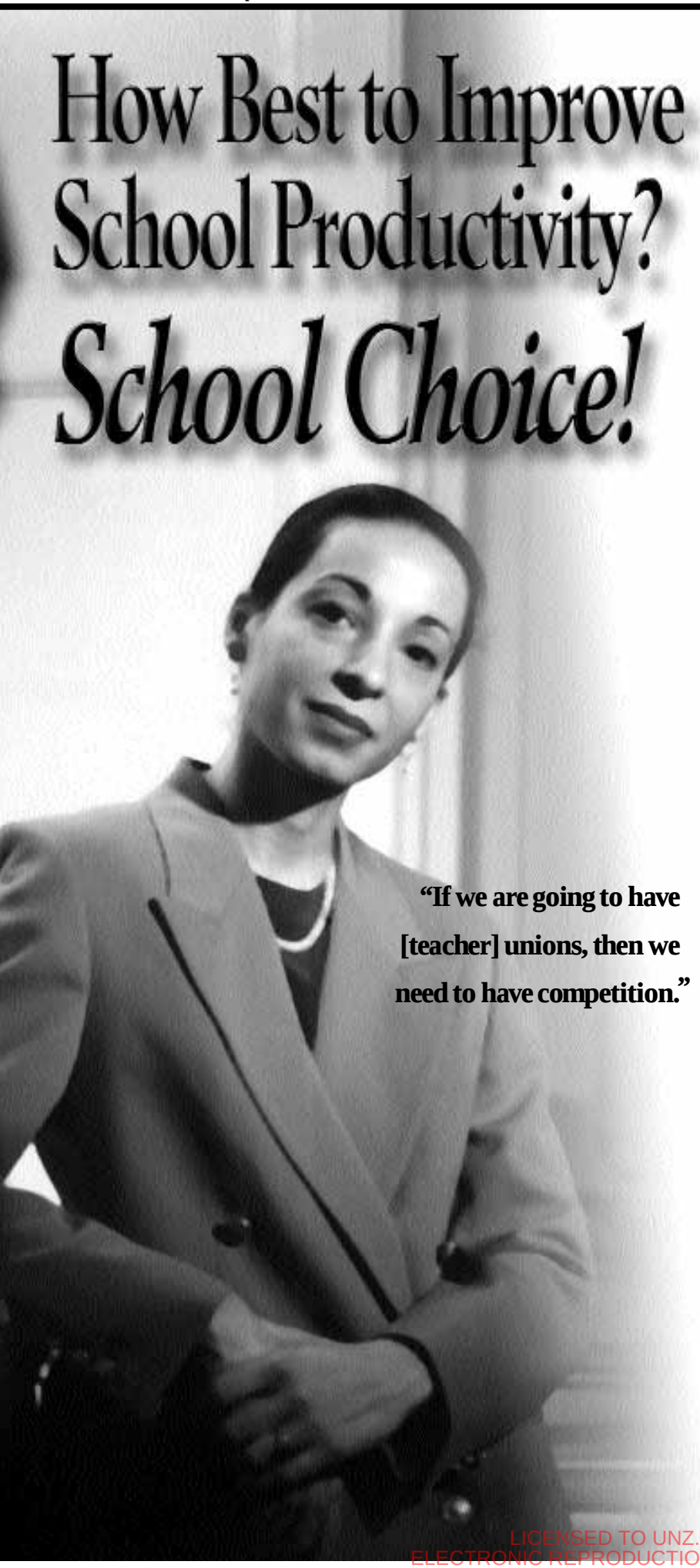
How Best to Improve School Productivity? School Choice!



"If we are going to have [teacher] unions, then we need to have competition."

AN INTERVIEW WITH CAROLINE MINTER HOXBY
BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Although it's only seven years since Caroline Minter Hoxby received her Ph.D. in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the brilliance of her subsequent research at Harvard University into the effectiveness and cost of public education has established her as one of the leading economists of the day.

What is particularly striking about Hoxby's research is her ability to identify natural variations in different public school conditions that are equivalent to the implementation of different public policy proposals for class-size reduction, school district consolidation, and centralization of education funding.

Hoxby's research conclusions often contradict conventional wisdom and consequently have rankled teacher union leaders and members of the public education establishment.

Among her findings:

- Competition among public schools improves productivity by lowering costs and increasing student achievement;
- School choice results in higher pay for more effective teachers;
- The local property tax is one of the best and most stable methods of financing public schools;
- Class size has no effect on student achievement; and
- Teacher unions lead to lower student achievement.

Currently a professor of economics at Harvard University, Hoxby comes from a family of educators. Her mother was a teacher and her father, now involved in the reform of Cleveland's public schools, was an undersecretary of education in the Carter administration. Hoxby received an A.B. in economics from Harvard University in 1988, a M.Phil. from England's Oxford University in 1990, and a Ph.D. from MIT in 1994. At all three institutions, the theses she submitted each garnered an award.

The author of numerous research papers on the economics of public education, Hoxby has testified before Congress, state legislatures, and courts on school finance equalization, tax policy for education initiatives, and charter school legislation. Besides teaching graduate and undergraduate classes at Harvard, her other affiliations include Faculty Research Fellow with the National Bureau of Economic Research, senior advisor to the Brookings Institution, and membership in the Hoover Institution's Koret Task Force on K-12 Education.

During a brief break from her summer research projects, Hoxby spoke with *School Reform News* Managing Editor George Clowes.

CLOWES: *Tell me a little bit about your background and how you came to be involved in looking at productivity in the education sector?*

HOXBY: In two ways my background is related to education. For an economist like myself, it's natural to be interested in the reason why the education sector, which is very important in the United States, has low productivity and very poor productivity growth compared to other sectors in the U.S. Economists are increasingly interested in sectors that are neither for-profit nor strictly government-controlled, but are somewhere in between. Health care and education are two such sectors.

The other reason I am interested in education is that I care about children and the kind of a life they will face if they do become well educated. American children need to be educated so that they can contribute to the future economy of the United States. I think that the education sector is in crisis because it is no longer doing an adequate job of providing the key input—educated workers—for our complex and technology-intensive economy. You simply cannot build an information-oriented economy with workers who are poorly educated.

CLOWES: *You have said that American schools are in a productivity crisis. What are the symptoms of this, and how did we get into this situation?*

HOXBY: The main symptom of the productivity crisis is the fact that productivity has fallen almost 50 percent in the past 30 years. We measure productivity by dividing a measure of student achievement by per-pupil spending in inflation-adjusted dollars. Regardless of which achievement measure we use, we find a decline in productivity of 40 to 50 percent. This is because achievement has been flat or slightly declining, while costs have been escalating rapidly.

Most people favor measuring achievement with standardized tests that are given to a representative sample of students in the nation. The most appropriate test for this purpose is the National Assessment of Educational Progress, because it is *designed* to trace the achievement of American students over time. However, you would get similar results with other measures, such as the percentage of students who graduate from high school or scores on tests like the Stanford-9 or the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

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CLOWES: *How are schools able to increase costs so enormously without increasing the quality of the product?*

HOXBY: Schools don't face enough competition. Just imagine competing grocery stores. If one of them decided to increase its prices but offer exactly the same products, people would go to the other grocery stores and the store would quickly go out of business. Unfortunately, parents do not have sufficient opportunity to change schools so that they can say, "My school is more expensive than before and it doesn't seem to be doing better than other competing schools. Therefore I'm going to send my child to another school." In other words, competition in the education industry is too weak to be an effective brake on costs.

In addition, some factors that have decreased productivity affect many schools and are, therefore, difficult to combat in a low competition environment.

For instance, many schools go through curricular fads that last only two or three years. The fads have very little effect on achievement, but they are costly to implement, so they lower productivity. However, a fad will hit most schools in an area at the same time, so unless there is strong competition, schools will jump on the latest bandwagon.

CLOWES: *What has been the effect of teacher unions on productivity?*

HOXBY: Unions are another great example. In the United States, there are both private-sector unions and public-sector unions, like the teacher unions.

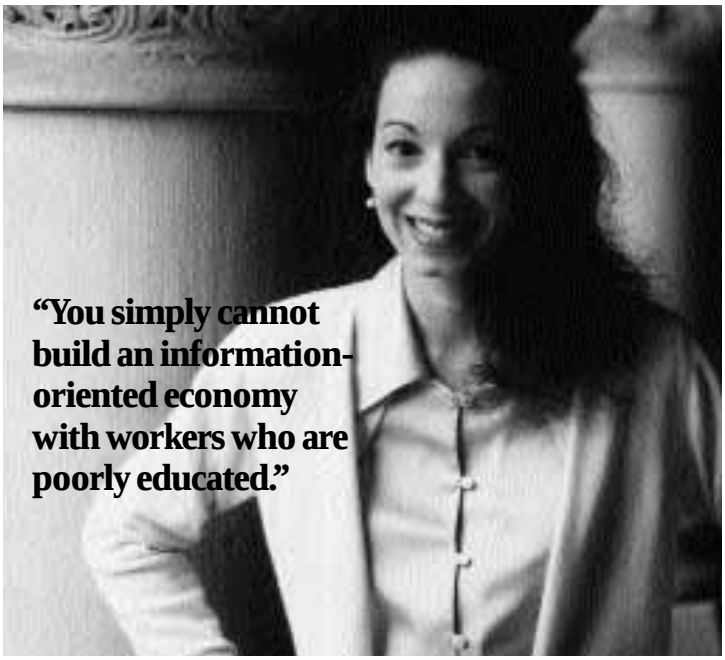
In the private sector, union demands are constrained by the firm's need to compete in the marketplace. A union knows perfectly well that it should not negotiate a contract that would cripple the firm vis-a-vis its competition and drive the firm out of business.

In contrast, the teacher unions can be very demanding for their members, who often want contracts that are not best for students. There's no effective brake on the teacher unions because they are not forced to negotiate contracts that permit their schools to remain competitive. There is just not much of a competitive marketplace out there.

For instance, suppose all the local teacher unions say, "Look, we want teachers to spend fewer hours in the classroom." The superintendent who opposes that request faces an unpleasant battle. More importantly, the superintendent won't be rewarded for sticking his or her neck out. Parents cannot come flocking to the superintendent's school because there isn't any mechanism that allows them to do that. Thus, there is almost no incentive to be the superintendent who fights a bad contract or an increase in wages that isn't accompanied by an improvement in teaching. Without competition, a superintendent cannot get rewarded by the marketplace.

If there were competition, teacher unions would not have nearly as bad an effect on productivity as they currently have. Competition, in and of itself, reins in the most excessive of union demands.

CLOWES: *That leads to the issue of class-size reduction, which both Bob Chase and Sandra Feldman recently claimed in* The Washington Post *would increase student achievement. Would it?*



HOXBY: The evidence suggests that class-size reduction has no effect on student achievement. There are literally hundreds of studies of class size, which have been very effectively reviewed by Eric Hanushek, that suggest that reducing class size does not raise achievement.

I have a study in which I examined every change in class size at every elementary school in Connecticut over a 20-year period. In schools, class size varies from year to year because enrollment varies. Therefore, with 20 years and 800-some schools, there is a tremendous amount of variation in class size to examine.

I found there was no effect of class size on achievement at all, even when children were in small classes for all six years of elementary school.

There really is only one study in which a class-size reduction improved student achievement: the Tennessee STAR experiment. But the effect on achievement was tiny—a 10 percent reduction in class size raised achievement by two one-hundredths of a standard deviation in achievement test scores.

More importantly, in the Tennessee STAR experiment, everyone involved knew that if the class-size reduction didn't affect achievement, the experimental classes would return to their normal size and a general class-size reduction would not be funded by the legislature. In other words, principals and teachers had strong incentives to make the reduction work. Unfortunately, class-size reductions are never accompanied by such incentives when they are enacted as a policy.

Also, it is worth keeping in mind that class-size reduction is very expensive. A 10 percent reduction in class size typically costs about $850 per year per student. For such a large amount of money, we could fund programs that are much more likely to raise achievement.

Reducing class size is a perfect example of a policy that the teacher unions like, but that lowers school productivity. The unions like it because each teacher has less work and more teachers have to be hired.

CLOWES: *Chase and Feldman also compare class-size reduction to school vouchers, which they claim don't have any effect. But I understand your analysis of the Milwaukee voucher program shows they do have a significant effect.*

HOXBY: Milwaukee is interesting because it's really the only voucher program in the United States that is big enough to be a threat to the local public school system.

The Milwaukee voucher program started in 1990, but for the first eight years of its existence it was poorly funded and forced to remain very small. No more than 1,000 children were allowed to receive vouchers, and parents could never be certain the program would exist in the next school year.

But, starting in the 1998-99 school year, the ceiling on the number of vouchers was raised to 15,000 students, and the voucher amount increased substantially, to about $5,000 per student. Also, the voucher program was approved by the courts, so its existence was not so precarious. Thus, it suddenly became a threat to the Milwaukee public schools. More than 65,000 Milwaukee public school students became eligible for vouchers, and there were some schools in Milwaukee where 90 percent of the students were eligible for vouchers.

From 1998-1999 onwards, the schools that faced the most competition from the vouchers improved student achievement radically—by about 0.6 of a standard deviation each year. That is an enormous, almost unheard-of, improvement. Keep in mind the schools in question had had a long history of low achievement. Yet they were able to get their act together quickly. The most threatened schools improved the most, not only compared to other schools in Milwaukee but also compared to other schools in the state of Wisconsin that served poor, urban students.

Milwaukee shows what public school administrators can tell you: Schools *can* improve if they are under serious competition.

Most superintendents and principals know where the problems are in their schools. Unfortunately, they often cannot make needed changes because they are opposed by constituencies like the teacher unions. Such constituencies back down only when a school's existence is threatened.

For instance, administrators usually know which teachers aren't performing, but they hesitate to fire them or pressure them to quit because the union will fight the change. However, when a school is faced with losing students—and, thus, teaching positions—the union will decide that getting rid of under-performing teachers is the lesser of two evils.

CLOWES: *What kinds of policies would restore school productivity?*

HOXBY: Although one might say, "We shouldn't have teacher unions because they've harmed school productivity," one has to recognize that the unions are here to stay. Thus, it is more reasonable to say that, if we are going to have unions, then we need to have competition. Competition can ensure that union demands are in concert with the goals of improving student achievement and satisfying parents.

In short, I think school choice is probably the policy most likely to restore school productivity.

The other policy that can help is spreading information about school performance. Such policies are known by a variety of terms—school accountability, school report cards—but the key thing is that parents, voters, and legislators get solid information about achievement and school costs.

Parents, voters, and legislators are *supposed* to control schools. How can we expect them to a good job if they do not have information?

CLOWES: *Could you comment on the quality of the voucher studies that have been done through Paul Peterson's group using randomized field trials?*

HOXBY: The best way to compare achievement in voucher schools and regular public schools is to do randomized access to the voucher schools.

In a medical experiment, some patients are randomly assigned to be treated and others are randomly assigned to be in the control group. In a voucher experiment, it's ideal if some students are randomly given access to vouchers and others are randomly assigned to the control group. The "control" students do not get vouchers, so they remain in whatever school they were in.

If there is random assignment in the experiment, it is easy to learn how vouchers affect achievement. Anyone with a calculator can compare data from the group of students who go to the voucher schools and data from the control group. Therefore, a researcher can get high-quality evidence by:

1) Setting up the experiments properly; and,

2) Making a serious effort to collect data from both the voucher and control students.

I've read all of the studies by Peterson's group, and I've seen them present a number of their studies. All of their studies use a proper randomized setup, and my sense is that they have tried very hard to gather as much data as possible. Of course, the group has not had perfect success gathering data on every voucher experiment, but some of that is inevitable.

In their most recent studies, where they've had more control over the data gathering, they've had very good rates of success by normal survey standards. I do not know that anyone could do much better.

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Testing, Testing, Testing . . .

Standardized tests reveal grading gap

At its annual convention in July, the National Education Association approved a resolution declaring the teacher union's opposition to "federal requirements to make significant decisions about schools, teachers, or children based primarily on test scores." The union also voted to support legislation that would allow parents to let their children boycott standardized tests. The union further directed its lobbyists to work against the mandatory testing provisions in the education bill currently being finalized on Capitol Hill.

Although various speakers promoted the idea of using "assessments through multiple measures," Oakland algebra teacher Judi Hirsch cut to the chase with her message to the assembled teachers: "If you want to know how your child is doing, you don't wait seven months to get the results of a standardized test," she declared. "You ask your child's teacher."

The NEA's position fails to recognize that the main reason lawmakers have turned to standardized testing for tracking student achievement is because the grades teachers assign to student work are unreliable. (See, for example, "Best and Brightest Pull Higher Grades for Lower SATs," *School Reform News*, December 2000.)

"Grade inflation is particularly extensive in high schools with a high percentage of disadvantaged students," SchoolMatch Advisory Board Chairman M. Donald Thomas recently told a national audience of school administrators. "This indicates clearly that expectations for students are very low, and standards do not match those of testing agencies."

As more and more state testing programs expose the gap between student test scores and the grades they are assigned by their teachers, the initial reaction of many parents and teachers is that the tests—not the grade from the teacher—must be wrong. This presents lawmakers with a difficult choice among three options:

- Develop a plan for schools to raise student achievement to the desired level of proficiency by the desired date.
- Lower the required level of proficiency.
- Put off the date by which students must reach the required level of proficiency.

For most states, the bad news is just coming in. Others already are having to make some difficult decisions.

Alaska

Lawmakers Delay After More than Half of Students Fail Math Test

After seeing the disappointing results from the high school graduation exam last year, Alaska legislators recently approved a bill to delay from 2002 to 2004 the requirement that students pass the test to graduate.

Although 75 percent of high school sophomores passed the reading test, only 48 percent passed the writing test and just 33 percent passed the math test. This year, math scores were better, but not reading and writing. Sixty-six percent of sophomores passed in reading, 46 percent in writing, and 43 percent in math.

Anchorage Daily News
June 1, 2000

California

D Grade Gets Diploma in High-Stakes Exam

Even though the California State Board of Education in June lowered the bar for passing the state's new high-stakes high school exit exam from a C grade to a D grade, more than half of the state's students still failed the test. If the state board had accepted the recommendations of a standards panel to use the C grade/70 percent cutoff, three out of four students would have failed math and one out of two would have failed English.

With the D grade/60 percent cutoff, less than 45 percent of the state's freshmen scored high enough to get a diploma in 2004.

San Jose Mercury News
June 8, 2001

Kentucky

Inflationary Revision of Score-Setting

Instead of grading student performance against a set of predetermined academic standards, the Kentucky State Board of Education in June approved grading student performance on a curve.

When Kentucky parent Richard G. Innes compared the original and revised scoring results for 2000 CATS scores, he found "a massive and highly inflationary revision to the score-setting process for Kentucky's public school assessments." The percentage of students classified as proficient jumped from 15 to 37 percent for elementary schools, from 13 to 34 percent for middle schools, and from 21 to 29 percent for high schools.

EducationNews.org
June 12, 2001

Illinois

38 Percent Fail New HS Test

Illinois high school students can't blow off state tests any more. That's because the American College Test (ACT) is part of the state's new Prairie State Achievement Examination for high school students, and the results of the test will appear on their transcripts.

Even so, when the figures from the first year's tests were released in early July, the results disappointed educators and legislators as well as students.

Forty-three percent of the state's eleventh-graders failed in science, 41 percent failed in math, 38 percent failed in reading and in writing, and 35 percent failed in social science.

Illinois State Schools Superintendent Glenn "Max" McGee and Illinois State Board of Education Chairman Ron Gidwitz both said they had no plans to lower the pass-fail marks for individual tests in order to decrease the percentage of students who fail.

Chicago Tribune
July 11, 2001

Louisiana

Almost Two-Thirds of Eighth-Graders Fail Math

To move to the next grade in Louisiana public schools, students have to pass the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program exam. That doesn't bode well for the 64 percent of New Orleans' eighth-graders who failed the math portion of the test in May, or the 47 percent who failed the English portion.

Last year, 63 percent failed math and 37 percent failed English. Students who fail the test must attend summer school and retake the test.

The Times-Picayune
May 12, 2001

Maryland

Baltimore Boosts Test Scores

For the second straight year, first- through fifth-grade students in Baltimore's public schools have made significant gains on national reading and math tests. The improvement comes four years after the city and the State of Maryland formed a partnership to address the problems of what was called an "academically bankrupt system."

Three years ago, only 29 percent of the city's first-graders could read at or above the national average for their grade. This year, the figure is 56 percent. In math, 52 percent are at or above the national average, compared to 30 percent in 1998.

Baltimore Sun
May 18, 2001

New York

Curve Boosts Pass Rate

A month after school superintendents urged the state Board of Regents to keep the passing grade on the Regents tests at 55 until 2007, educators found the state was adjusting raw test scores on a grading curve, making it even easier for students to achieve a passing grade.

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Education Industry News

A sampling of education industry news from The Education Economy, *a weekly publication of the market research firm Eduventures.com, which conducts research on the pre-K-12, post-secondary, corporate training, and consumer markets worldwide. This copyrighted material is used by permission of Eduventures.com, Inc.*

Advantage Schools Taken Over

On July 3, Mosaica Education, Inc., a charter school management firm, announced it acquired Advantage Schools, a manager of education institutions. The combined company will have operations in nine states and the District of Columbia. During the last school year the two companies operated 25 charter schools that served 14,000 students.

AOL Users to Get Online Library

On July 19, Questia Media, an online library, announced an agreement with America Online, under which Questia will offer online library resources to AOL members and Netscape users. Questia also will sponsor portions of AOL's Research & Learn Channel, which offers students and lifelong learners a one-stop shop for conducting research and learning more about specialized topics.

Apple Rules

According to figures from Quality Education Data, a provider of K-12 and higher-education market research, Apple systems are twice as prevalent as other hardware in U.S. public schools. QED found that 2.7 to 3.2 million schools maintain Apple systems. Dell has 1.24 to 1.57 million systems in schools, and Compaq Computer Corp. has between 738,680 and 997,485.

College-Level Content for Online High Schoolers

On June 25, OpenMind Publishing Group, a collaborative publishing service, and Advanced Academics, Inc., an online course and instructional services provider for the high school market, announced a partnership whereby school districts offering Advanced Academics, Inc.'s online courses will now have access to OpenMind's dynamic college-level content.

www.ompg.com / www.advancedacademics.com

For-Profit Higher Ed Shows Strong Growth

A recent study from the Education Commission of the States, "Meeting Needs and Making Profits: The Rise of For-Profit Degree-Granting Institutions," reported that for-profit degree-granting colleges grew at a significantly faster rate than their not-for-profit counterparts over the last 10 years, increasing their share of the two-year market from 19 to 28 percent and increasing their share of the four-year market from 3 to 8 percent.

Gale Group Acquires Blackbirch Press

Gale Group, a division of Thomson Corporation's Thomson Learning division, announced on June 9 that it acquired Blackbirch Press, a Connecticut-based publisher of books for children in grades K-6. Gale plans to integrate Blackbirch into its Greenhaven editorial operations.

Hammett Will Supply Chancellor Schools

Chancellor Academies, Inc., an operator of charter and private schools, plans to enroll 5,000 new students at schools in Florida, Arizona, and Washington, DC. Under the terms of a partnership agreement announced on July 27, J.L. Hammett Co., a provider of school supplies for the K-12 industry, will provide coordination of the purchase and installation of furniture and equipment at each Chancellor school site.

McGraw-Hill Launches K-12 Digital Learning

On July 3, McGraw-Hill Education, a K-12 educational publisher, announced the launch of McGraw-Hill Digital Learning, a new division devoted solely to digital learning programs for the K-12 market. The new division will develop learning programs aimed at improving teaching and learning, focusing on remedial and gifted students who have unique learning styles and are often under-served.

VIP Tone Adds Assessment Product

VIP Tone, Inc., a provider of applications and infrastructure for the K-12 market, announced on June 16 that it acquired Quiz Studio, a Web-based provider of questionnaire solutions for education and marketing. With the acquisition, VIP Tone seeks to address the accountability challenges of K-12 school districts by assimilating Quiz Studio's assessment product with its K-12 offering.

Virtual Schools Expand Course Offerings

On June 25, Apex Learning Inc., a builder and operator of virtual schools, and Power-Glide International, Inc., a developer of foreign language courses, announced a partnership whereby Power-Glide will provide foreign language and distance-learning instructors to teach Apex's six new French, German, and Spanish courses for grades 9-12. Apex also announced it will offer its online AP classes to students in seven new states: Connecticut, Indiana, North Carolina, Oregon, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, and the District of Columbia. With the new contracts, Apex Learning now reaches 22 states.

www.apexlearning.com / www.power-glide.com

World's Largest E-education System

Tengtu International Corporation, a developer of educational software, and China's Ministry of Education announced a partnership on June 27. Under the terms of the agreement, Tengtu and the Ministry will co-operate and co-develop China's Broadband Education Resources Centre, a national database networking system of teaching and learning resources to support Web-based and distance learning for K-12 schools. Tengtu will share its profits 70/30 percent with the Ministry of Education.

www.tengtu.com

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In the recent biology/living environment exam, for example, students needed to answer only 33 percent of the test material correctly to achieve a score of 55. Answering 46 percent of the material correctly would bring a student's score up to 65, which is what the passing grade was until 1996.

The Buffalo News
June 12 and July 18, 2001

Ohio

Lawmakers Bring Back Social Promotion

A few years ago, Ohio lawmakers approved a "reading guarantee" that required school districts, effective next year, to hold back fourth-graders who hadn't passed the state proficiency test in reading. But for the past four years, the percentage of Ohio fourth-graders who passed the reading test has fallen from 68 percent in 1998 to 57 percent this year.

Faced with the prospect of having 40 percent of fourth-graders repeating the grade, the legislature abandoned the reading guarantee and allowed social promotion to continue.

The Plain Dealer
May 31, 2001

Tough Question?

A sample question from the 1998 Ohio ninth-grade math proficiency test is: About how long is a new, standard-sized pencil? (A) 7 inches, (B) 7 pounds, (C) 7 yards, or (D) 7 ounces.

"Such a question would be more appropriate for the second grade," notes C. Bradley Thompson, associate professor of history and political science at Ashland University. "If, as the teachers say, they are spending all of their time 'teaching to the test,' one wonders how long it takes to teach a 14-year-old the length of a pencil."

Buckeye Policy Perspective
February 2001

Texas

Bar Lowered to Pass Math

Students who took the high-stakes Texas Assessment of Academic Skills exam this spring had to answer significantly fewer math questions correctly to pass the test, according to test documents from the Texas Education Agency.

Two years ago, students had to get about 70 percent of the questions correct to pass, but this year they had to get only about half correct.

TEA officials said the adjustment was made because the test was more difficult than in previous years. Critics worry the lower passing standard calls this year's improvements into question.

The Dallas Morning News
June 9, 2001

Wisconsin

Only 7 Percent Proficient in Math in Milwaukee

Only two out of 25 students in sixth-, seventh-, or ninth-grade classes are proficient or better in math, according to the first results from the Milwaukee Public Schools' expanded program of standardized testing. Less than one-third of ninth-graders can read at a proficient or better level, with a typical ninth-grader being two years behind in reading.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
June 18, 2001

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Who Tells Teachers They Can Teach?

Classes and tests don't ask much of prospective educators

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

QUESTION:
For which grade level would the following test questions be appropriate?

1. Which of the following is equal to a quarter of a million?
(a) 40,000
(b) 250,000
(c) 2,500,000
(d) 1/ 4,000,000
(e) 4 / 1,000,000

2. Martin Luther King Jr., [insert the correct choice] for the poor of all races.
(a) spoke out passionately
(b) spoke out passionate
(c) did spoke out passionately
(d) has spoke out passionately
(e) had spoken out passionate

3. What would you do if your student sprained an ankle?
(a) Put a Band-Aid on it
(b) Ice it
(c) Rinse it with water

4. Find the grammatical and spelling errors in this sentence:
"Only if our society realize that there are so many factors contributing to a student's test score, then teachers will be willing to take the blam game. Who is to blam when students don't do homeworks? who is to blam when pareants don't care to come to the teacher pareant conference?"

ANSWER:
Although none of these questions should tax the abilities of the average sixth-grader, the test questions in fact are not for students in grades K-12 at all . . . but questions that assess the abilities of prospective and current *teachers* of K-12 students.

The first two questions on this page are samples from the Praxis I test for prospective teachers. The third question is from the 1999 teacher certification test in Illinois, and the fourth is a quotation from a recent letter to *The New York Post* sent by a certified high school social studies teacher in New York City. The *Post* ran a series of stories a few years ago about the poor spelling and grammar found in teachers' written evaluation of students.

"We have some issues with teaching quality," Board of Education President Ninfa Segarra told the *Post*. "An example like this shows it's worse than we might have thought."

New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy admitted to *Post* reporter Carl Campanile that the two exams used to certify teachers "are not difficult." The content of the tests is easier than the questions on the SAT, according to one new teacher. Nevertheless, 31 percent of New York City public school teachers have failed at least one of the exams and the classroom skills test required for certification.

Why do so many teachers have such a limited base of knowledge? The surprising answer is that their teacher education classes and textbooks do not emphasize knowledge as being important.

"[T]eacher education classes and textbooks do not emphasize knowledge as being important."

Teachers as Facilitators

The traditional form of teaching is teacher-centered, where knowledgeable teachers transmit their knowledge and information to students. However, the teaching model preferred in schools of education is student-centered, where teachers function not as dispensers of knowledge but as facilitators assisting students in the discovery of knowledge for themselves.

Earlier this year, the Pacific Research Institute released a report by Lance T. Izumi and K. Gwynne Coburn, "Facing the Classroom Challenge," on teacher training at a sample of the schools of education in the California State University system. After reviewing quantitative research studies, the report concluded teacher-centered methods are more effective in raising student achievement . . . but the CSU schools of education favored less-effective student-centered methods.

Nancy Ichinaga, principal of the renowned Bennett-Kew elementary school in Los Angeles, told Izumi and Coburn that student-centered teaching practices had a harmful effect, particularly on low-income students. Ichinaga said they had more trouble with teachers who were certified than those who weren't.

She also admitted that 90 percent of the people she had hired in the last few years were "emergency-credentialed" and therefore had had no teacher training and no exposure to the following student-centered philosophy:

- "Content knowledge is not seen to be as important as possessing teaching skills and knowledge about the students being taught." (from a San Francisco State University pedagogy textbook)
- "No longer can teachers expect to be fountains of wisdom and convey knowledge to passive students." (from a CSU Fresno textbook)
- Advocating less student "sitting, listening, receiving, and absorbing information" and more "active learning in the classroom with all the attendant noise and movement of students doing, talking, and collaborating." (from a required text at CSU Dominguez Hills)
- "We cannot afford to become so bogged down in grammar and spelling that we forget the whole story," which includes "racism, sexism, and the greed for money and human labor that disguises itself as 'globalization.'" (from a CSU Dominguez Hills multicultural textbook)
- "There is no place for requiring students to practice tedious calculations that are more efficiently and accurately done using calculators." (from a San Francisco State University math text)

Although the Pacific Research Institute study was conducted in California, similar studies in other states would find the same thing, according to John E. Stone, an educational psychologist and professor in the College of Education at East Tennessee State University.

For more information...

WWW The April 2001 report by Lance T. Izumi and K. Gwynne Coburn, "Facing the Classroom Challenge: Teacher Quality and Teacher Training in California's Schools of Education," is available at the Pacific Research Institute's Web site at **www.pacificresearch.org**.

TRAINING continued from page 1

diplomatically, "There is a national teacher shortage and teachers do not feel well prepared." McGriff added that "our [Edison's] curriculum will integrate theory and practice. Each course will have a clinical component. Our graduates will close the achievement gap."

Edison currently plans to offer only graduate degrees in education. Those entering the program, which will last for a summer and two semesters, will have to establish mastery of the subject matter they will teach. Graduates will be guaranteed jobs in Edison Schools, although they would be free to go elsewhere.

In addition to offering instruction in traditional classrooms, Edison Teacher Colleges plan to provide opportunities online.

Sylvan Learning Systems

Another significant development has been the quiet entry into teacher training of Sylvan Learning Systems, a nationwide company that specializes in private academic tutoring. Over the past year, Sylvan hasn't evinced interest in setting up its own teacher colleges, but instead has been contracting with individual school districts to provide what they need to bring their uncertified teachers up to acceptable standards.

Seeking to fill a critical need for well-qualified K-12 teachers, Sylvan began its first teacher training programs in the fall of 2000. Much of the coursework is offered online. In addition, Sylvan has assigned "instructional managers"—mainly retired educators—to groups of 25 teachers in training.

In Texas, Sylvan has worked with school districts that produce one-fourth of the state's new teachers through their own licensure systems. The company focuses on helping teachers working on emergency certificates and long-term substitute teachers.

Recently, Sylvan's clout as a trainer of teachers took a quantum leap forward with its investment of $32.8 million to acquire 41 percent ownership of Walden University, an institution based in Bonita Springs, Florida and Minneapolis, Minnesota. Walden has pioneered in distance and online learning for working adults who seek graduate degrees.

Sylvan brings to relatively small Walden the name recognition it earned from helping lagging K-12 students catch up, and Walden brings to the partnership its full accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, which opens e-students' access to federal financial aid.

Market analysts said Walden's online expertise combined with Sylvan's credible move to fill a huge void in teacher preparation makes for extraordinary growth potential.

"Walden clearly has a good model," noted Adam Newman, senior analyst with Eduventures.com. "It's accredited. It has the infrastructure in place. It understands the distance-learning postsecondary market. The merger could end up being more about how to use Walden to grow Sylvan."

Dr. Deborah McGriff heads up the effort of Edison Schools, Inc. to develop charter schools nationwide.

Other Partners

A third partner is another Sylvan investment, Canter and Associates, which already had developed with Walden a new specialization in elementary reading and literacy as part of the university's master's degree program in education.

Yet another partnership Sylvan has entered—this one with Teachers College, Columbia University—underscores the company's desire to work within the education establishment, not to challenge it head-on. Teachers College is the granddaddy of U.S. schools of education, and the single most influential force driving ed-schools to train would-be teachers in child-centered, rather than teacher-directed, teaching methods. According to a June 2000 announcement, Sylvan will work with Teachers College in preparing teachers to win certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

"Within seven years, Edison expects to be training would-be teachers on campuses in 20 cities."

The release touted NBPTS, a creation of the Carnegie Corporation that is now federally funded, as "highly selective" and "rigorous." Critics strongly disagree. The National Council on Teacher Quality has pointed out that NBPTS—by

TRAINING continued next page

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"Teach for America" Instructors Shine

Program's success raises questions about education schools

BY GEORGE A. CLOWES

Instructors who enter teaching through the decade-old Teach for America program perform as well as or better than teachers entering the profession by more traditional routes, according to a new study of teachers in the Houston Independent School District.

Since TFA teachers are given only limited preparation for work in the classroom, the program's success raises questions about the value of four-year teacher preparation programs at the nation's 1,200 schools of education.

"This study shows that you don't have to undergo years of training in a school of education to be a satisfactory teacher," said Chester E. Finn Jr., president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, which sponsored the study. "Able and well-educated college graduates who undergo a brief period of intensive training such as TFA offers can be a great source of talented teachers for troubled school districts that desperately need them."

The Teach for America program, developed by education reformer Wendy Kopp, works something like the Peace Corps. TFA recruits talented liberal arts graduates from competitive colleges, puts them through special training, and places them in some of the nation's toughest public schools.

Although TFA teachers were welcomed into Houston's public schools by U.S. Education Secretary Roderick Paige when he was superintendent there, the program was strongly criticized recently by Stanford University education professor Linda Darling-Hammond for placing unqualified—i.e., uncertified—teachers in schools that deserve better.

The new study, performed by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at the Hoover Institution, found TFA teachers produce as high or higher student achievement as other HISD teachers, regardless of their certification and years of experience. On average, the impact on students of having a TFA teacher is always positive, often large, but not statistically significant. Although the size of the effect varies by grade, subject, and peer group, the results are strongest in mathematics in elementary and middle schools.

"This study shows that you don't have to undergo years of training in a school of education to be a satisfactory teacher."

CHESTER E. FINN, JR., PRESIDENT THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION

While there are variations among teachers, TFA teachers as a group show less variation in quality than teachers entering from other routes, according to the study's authors, Margaret Raymond, Stephen Fletcher, and Javier Luque.

"The range in difference of TFA teachers' contribution to student performance is for the most part tighter than the range for non-TFA teachers, meaning TFA teachers are more consistent and less risky as a group of potential employees," the study concludes. "[T]he curves show clearly that the highest-performing teachers were consistently TFA teachers, and the lowest-performing teachers were consistently not TFA."

In addition, TFA teachers are less likely to leave after one year, and many elect to remain in the classroom beyond their two-year commitment.

A few days before the CREDO report was published, the issue of how well colleges of education prepare their graduates for work in the classroom was brought to national attention by First Lady Laura Bush in an interview with The Associated Press. Bush, who taught second grade from 1968 to 1972, said she hopes to work with education colleges to "really beef up" teacher training, since new teachers were not always prepared for the classroom.

"I think it's unfair for colleges of education to not make sure that their teachers are really prepared when they graduate," she said.

For more information...

WWW The August 1, 2001 report, *Teach for America: An Evaluation of Teacher Differences and Student Outcomes in Houston, Texas*, by Margaret Raymond, Stephen Fletcher, and Javier Luque is available from the Web site of the Hoover Institution's Center for Research on Education Outcomes at **http://credo.stanford.edu**.

The National Council on Teacher Quality, an information clearinghouse on teacher quality issues, should be bookmarked by anyone with an interest in teacher preparation, teacher quality, and alternative teacher certification. It provides up-to-date information on news, research, literature, and policy options, together with many links to other useful Web sites. NCTQ is found on the Web at **www.tqclearinghouse.org**.

policy—ignores mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and grammar made by candidates (even English teachers) in their bids for national certification. In addition, NBPTS' examiners give no weight to whether candidates' students have reached acceptable levels of academic achievement. Instead NBPTS relies heavily on portfolios, including classroom videos, that candidates prepare.

Teachers College will provide course content and instruction for the Internet-delivered NBPTS prep course. Sylvan will concentrate on supporting on-site mentors and working with local school districts.

University of Phoenix

The 75,000-student University of Phoenix, the nation's largest for-profit university and another pioneer in online instruction, is also bidding to make a large impact on teacher training. Its College of Education, like Sylvan, is seeking to cooperate with the teacher-education establishment.

The University's campuses in Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico recently were accepted into one of the gatekeepers of teaching, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), after that organization changed its bylaws to permit for-profit memberships. Jane McAuliffe, dean of Phoenix's College of Education, said the college also plans to seek accreditation from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and has staff in NCATE training this summer.

That has caused a degree of consternation in the ed-school community, where some pedagogues deem "profit" a dirty word. But Allen Glenn, dean emeritus of the University of Washington's College of Education and chairman of an AACTE task force that studied private teacher training, sees potential benefits in diversification.

"When people have choices, competition and service become instrumental," Dr. Glenn commented. "Colleges of education are now just one choice among many for educators. Competition will only escalate."

The University currently has 1,100 students in its post-baccalaureate teacher education program, which as of September 1 will be phased out in favor of a MAEd degree program with a teacher-licensure program attached to it, according to McAuliffe. There are currently 2,700 students in the MAEd programs, which are offered in special education, e-education, curriculum and instruction, curriculum and technology, administration and supervision, and educational counseling.

"Sometimes people are alarmed at our high enrollment numbers," commented McAuliffe. "In reality, our local campuses are relatively small with respect to enrollment. We have many campuses or learning centers in a state because we locate ourselves where we are needed. We design programs to meet the local needs and can do so in a fairly quick fashion because we involve the local educators as faculty and curriculum developers."

She added, "Many people believe that we are strictly an online university. This is not so."

Core Knowledge Foundation

Meanwhile, nonprofit providers like the Core Knowledge schools also are involved in training their own teachers. E.D. Hirsch Jr., the CK founder and critic of ed-schools' student-centered approaches, reports the Core Knowledge Foundation is preparing grade-by-grade handbooks describing what teachers need to know at each level, as well as subject-matter syllabi for pre-service and in-service courses.

As private providers become an increasingly strong force in training teachers, it is logical to assume the field will open to divergent educational philosophies and operate less like an entrenched monopoly.

Robert Holland is a senior fellow at the Lexington Institute, a public policy think tank in Arlington, Virginia. His email address is rholl1176@yahoo.com.

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Just The Facts: Alternative Certification by State

STATUS OF ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION	STATE	CONTACT	PHONE	E-MAIL	AGENCY
Implementing	Alabama	June H. Mabry	334/242-9977		Alabama Department of Education
Not using	Alaska	Julie Orsborn	907/465-2026	julie_orsborn@educ.state.ak.us	Alaska Department of Education
Implementing	Arizona	R. Berkley Lunt	602/542-4367		Arizona Department of Education
Implementing	Arkansas	Jim Chism	501/682-5762		Arkansas Department of Education
Implementing	California	Michael McKibbin	916/445-4438	mmckibbin@ctc.ca.gov	California Commission on Teacher Credentialing
Implementing	Colorado	Eugene J. Campbell	303/866-6932	campbell_e@cde.state.co.us	Colorado Department of Education
Implementing	Connecticut	Hilary E. Freedman	860/566-4267		Connecticut Department of Education
Implementing	Delaware	Barbara Van Dornick	302/831-3000		University of Delaware
Implementing	District of Columbia	Yvonne D. Holt	202/724-4246		District of Columbia Department of Education
Implementing	Florida		850/488-2317 or 850/488-2319		Florida Department of Education
Implementing	Georgia	Margaret M. Torrey	404/657-9000		Georgia Professional Standards Commission
Implementing	Hawaii	Clara Burrows	808/586-3276	clara_burrows@notes.k12.hi.us	Hawaii Department of Education
Implementing	Idaho	Michael P. Stefanic	208/332-6800		Idaho Department of Instruction
Implementing	Illinois	Dr. Rob Sampson	217/782-2805		Illinois State Board of Education
Considering	Indiana		317/232-9010		Indiana Professional Standards Board
Considering	Iowa	Anne Kruse	515/281-3611		Iowa Board of Educational Examiners
Not considering	Kansas	Ken Bungert	785/296-4073		Kansas Department of Education
Implementing	Kentucky	Dr. Susan Leib	502/573-4606		Kentucky Department of Education
Implementing	Louisiana	Robert G. Crew	504/342-3490		Louisiana Department of Education
Implementing	Maine	Nancy Ibarguen	207/287-5944	nancy_ibarguen@stadiums	Maine Department of Education
Implementing	Maryland	Joanne Ericson or Virginia Pilato	410/767-0406		Maryland Department of Education
Implementing	Massachusetts	Dennis DiCarlo	781/388-3300		Massachusetts Department of Education
Implementing	Michigan	Carolyn Logan	517/373-6505		Michigan Department of Education
Implementing	Minnesota	Michael Tollman	651/582-8833		Minnesota Department of Education
Implementing	Mississippi	Carolyn Alexander	601/359-3483	Alexander@mde.k12.ms.us	Mississippi Department of Education
Implementing	Missouri	John Miller	573/751-0051		Missouri Department of Education
Not considering	Montana	Marilyn Roberts	406/444-3150		Office of Public Instruction
Implementing	Nebraska	Robert Crosier	402/471-2496 or 402/471-0739		Nebraska Department of Education
Proposed alternatives	Nevada	Skip Wend	702/486-6455		Nevada Department of Education
Implementing	New Hampshire	Alexander J. Blastos	603/271-2407		New Hampshire Department of Education
Implementing	New Jersey	Ida B. Graham	609/292-2045	graham@doe.state.nj.us	New Jersey Department of Education
Implementing	New Mexico	Marilyn Scargall	505/827-6728		New Mexico Department of Education
Implementing	New York	Sanford E. Lake	518/474-6440		New York Education Department
Implementing	North Carolina	Van Brock Murray	919/733-4125		North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Not considering	North Dakota	Janet Place or Deb Jensen	701/328-2264	jplacek@state.nd.us	North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board
Implementing	Ohio	Marilyn Troyer	614/466-2761		Ohio Department of Education
Implementing	Oklahoma	Cindy Marose	405/521-3337		Oklahoma Department of Education
Implementing	Oregon	David Myton	503/378-3586		Oregon Teacher Standards/Practices
Implementing	Pennsylvania	Ronald Simanovich	717/787-3470		Pennsylvania Department of Education
Not considering	Rhode Island	David R. Roy	401/277-2675	rice@ride.ri.net	Rhode Island Department of Education
Implementing	South Carolina	Sandra Robe	803/734-8466		South Carolina Department of Education
Implementing	South Dakota	Dean Buchanan	605/773-3553	dean.buchanan@state.sd.us	South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs
Implementing	Tennessee	Amy Gallagher	615/532-4880		Tennessee Department of Education
Implementing	Texas	Dr. William Wale	512/469-3000		Texas State Board for Educator Certification
Implementing	Utah	Roger Mouritsen or Diane DeMan	801/538-7741	rstanfie@usoe.k12.ut.us	Utah State Office of Education
Considering	Vermont	Patricia Pallas	802/828-2445		Vermont Department of Education
Implementing	Virginia	Paul F. Joseph	804/786-6759	pjoseph@mail.vak12ed.edu or pjoseph@pen.k12.va.us	Virginia Department of Education
Implementing	Washington	Rosemarie Thomas	206/753-6773	rthomas@ospi.wednet.edu	Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Implementing	West Virginia	Barbara Brazeau	304/558-7010 or 800/982-2378		West Virginia Department of Education
Implementing	Wisconsin	Peter Burke	608/266-1027		Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Implementing	Wyoming	Linda Stowers	307/777-6261	lstowe@missc.state.wy.us	Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board

FOOTNOTE: *Source: National Center for Education Information http://www.ncei.org*
This table was created from information provided by the National Center for Education Information, which has compiled a 426-page report that details all of the states' requirements and program descriptions for alternative routes toward certification. The full report is available from the Center for $99, plus $5 for shipping and handling. If information is required only for certain states, send $12 for the first state and $5 for each additional state to NCEI, 4401-A Connecticut Avenue, NW, #212, Washington, D.C. 20008, 202/362-3444, fax: 202/362-3493.

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